The Romance *of a* Great Store

Edward Hungerford

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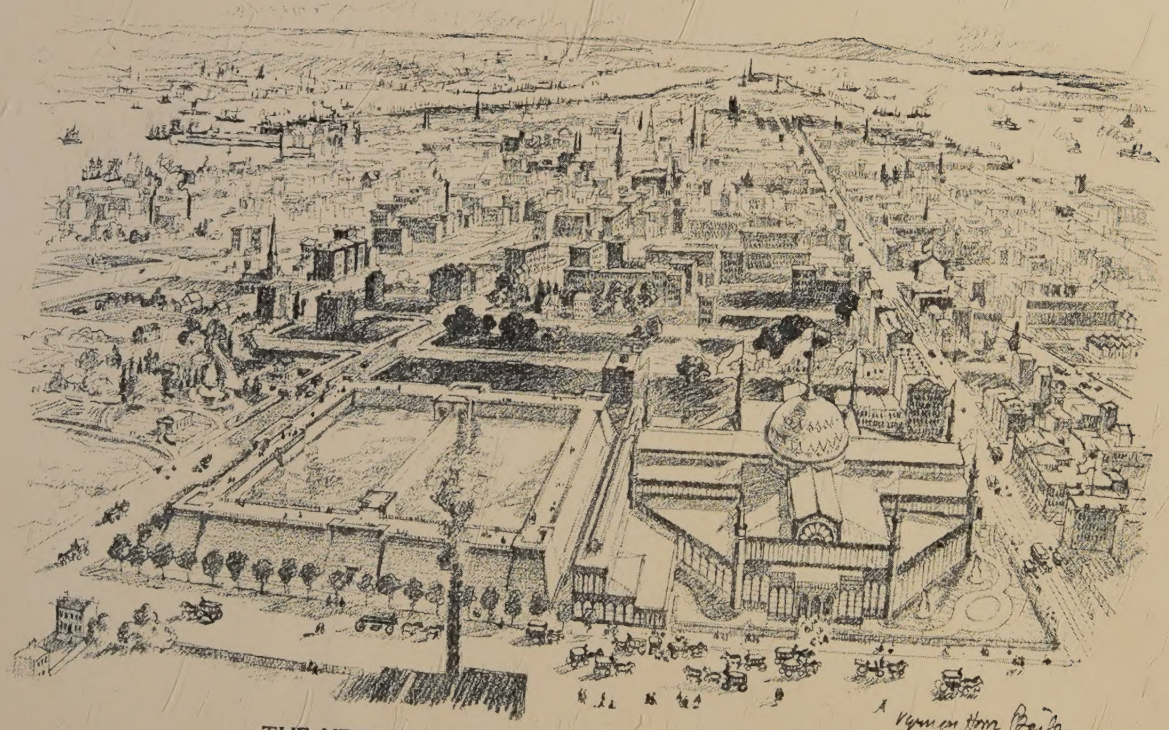
THE ROMANCE OF A GREAT STORE



THE NEW YORK TO WHICH MACY CAME—IN 1858

Looking south from 42d Street—The old Reservoir and the Crystal Palace in the foreground

The Romance of a Great Store

by
Edward Hungerford
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"The Personality of American Cities," "The Modern Railroad," etc.

Illustrated by
Vernon Howe Bailey

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To
the Men and Women
of
The Great Macy Family
Whose Fidelity and Interest,
Whose Enthusiasm and Ability
Have Upbuilded
A Lasting Institution of Worth
in
The Heart of a Vast City
This Book is Affectionately Dedicated
by its Author.

E. H.

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Introduction

"CAVEAT EMPTOR," the Romans said, in their day.

"Let the Buyer beware," we would read that phrase, today.

For nearly four thousand years, perhaps longer, *caveat emptor* ruled the hard world of barter. Yet for the past sixty years, or thereabouts, a new principle has come into merchandising. You may call it progress, call it idealism, call it ethics, call it what you will. I simply call it good business.

Caveat emptor has become a phrase thrust out of good merchandising. It is a pariah. The decent merchant of today despises it. On the contrary he prides himself upon the honor of his calling, upon the high value of his good name, untarnished. The man or the woman who comes into his store may come with the faith or the simplicity of the child. He or she may even be bereft of sight, itself—yet deal in faith and fearlessly.

Caveat emptor is indeed a dead phrase.

How and whence came this murder of a commercial derelict?

You may laugh and at first you may scoff, but the fact remains that the development of the department

store as we know it in the United States today first began some sixty or sixty-five years ago. And almost coincidently began the development of a code of morals in merchandising such as was all but undreamed of in this land, at any rate up to a decade or two before the coming of the Civil War. Not that there were no honest merchants in those earlier days of the republic. Oh no, there was a plenty of them—men whose integrity and whose sincerity were as little to be doubted as are those same qualities in our best merchants of today. Only yesterday these honest men were in the minority. The moral code in merchandising was yet inchoate, unformed.

It might remain unformed, intangible today if it had not been for the coming of the department store. The enormous consolidation and concentration that went to make these enterprises possible brought with them a competition—bitter and to the end unflinching—which hesitated at no legitimate means for the gaining of its end. But competition quickly found that the best means—the finest battle-sword—was honest commercial practice, and so girded that sword to its belt and bade *caveat emptor* begone.

The great department store around which these chapters are written assumes for itself, neither yesterday, today nor tomorrow, any monopoly of this virtue of commercial honesty. But it does assert, and will continue to assert that it was at least among the pioneers in the complete banishment of *caveat emptor*, that its founder—the man whose name it so proudly bears today—fought for these high principles when

the fighting was at the hardest and the temptations to move in the other direction were most alluring.

Of these principles you shall read in the oncoming chapters of this book. There are many, they are varied—in some respects they vary greatly from those upon which other and equally successful and equally honest merchandising establishments are today operated. Macy's has no quarrel with any of its competitors. It merely writes upon the record that, for itself, it is quite satisfied with the merchandising principles that its founder and the men who came after him saw fit to establish. Upon those the store has prospered—and prospered greatly. And because of such prosperity—social as well as commercial—because it feels that its selling principles are quite as valuable to its patrons as to the store itself, it has no intention of giving change to them. Macy's of today is like in soul and spirit to Macy's of yesterday; Macy's of tomorrow is planned to be like unto the Macy's of today—only vastly larger in its scope and influence.

For the convenience of the reader this book has been divided into three great parts, or books. Time has formed the logical factor of division. Time, as in the theater, forms these three books, or acts—Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow. They move in sequence. The stage-hands are placing the setting for the New York of yesterday—the New York that already has begun to fade, far from the eyes of even the oldest of the humans who shall come to read these pages. It is a charming New York, this American city of the late 'fifties, the city whose ladies go shopping in hoop-

skirts and in crinoline. It has dignity, taste, bustle, enterprise.

But anon of these. The stage is set. The director's foot comes stamping down upon the boards. The curtain rises. The first act begins.

Yesterday

I. The Ancestral Beginnings of Macy's

INTERWOVEN into the history of the ancient island of Nantucket are the names and annals of some of the earliest of our American families—the Coffins, the Eldredges, the Myricks, and the Macys. Their forbears came from England to America fully ten generations ago. They settled upon the remote and wind-swept isle and there to this day many of their descendants ply their vocations and have their homes.

In the beginning the vocation of these settlers was found to lie almost invariably upon a single path; and that path led down to the sea. They were sea-faring folk, those early residents of Nantucket: God-fearing, simple of speech and of action, yet mentally keen and alert. And from them sprang the segment of a race which was soon to grow far beyond the narrow barriers of the little island and to spread its splendid enthusiasm and energy far into a newborn land.

Among the very earliest of these Nantucket settlers was one Thomas Macy, who, from the beginning, took his fair place in the development of its fishing and its whaling industries. From him came a long line of descendants—a clean and sturdy record—and in the eighth generation of these there was born—on

August 29, 1822—as the son of John and Eliza Myrick Macy, the man whose name chiefly concerns this book—Rowland Hussey Macy.

The record of this young man's youth is not so consequential as to be worth the setting down in detail. It is enough perhaps to know that at the age of fifteen he followed the common Nantucket custom of those days and went away to sea; upon a whaling voyage which was to consume four long years before again he saw the belfried white spire of the South Church rising through the trees back of the harbor and which was to make him in fact as well as in name, Captain Macy.

Three years later he married. He chose for his wife, Miss Louisa Houghton, of Fairlees, Vermont. Their pleasant married life continued for thirty-three years, until the day of Mr. Macy's death. Mrs. Macy lived for several years afterwards, dying in New York City in 1886. They had three children, one of whom, Mrs. James F. Sutton, the widow of the founder of the American Art Galleries in New York, still survives and is living at her suburban home in Westchester County.

Such is the simple statistical record of the man who lived to be one of New York's great merchant princes, who, upon the simple foundations of good merchandising, of strength, integrity and initiative, upbuilded one of the great and most distinctive businesses of the greatest city of the two American continents. Back of it is another record—not so simple or so quickly told. It is the story of successes and of sorrows, of triumphs and of failures—but in the end of the final

triumph of New England conscience and energy and vision. It is with this last story that this book has its beginning.

It was not many moons after his marriage that young Macy started in business, in store-keeping in Boston. He was convinced that the sea was no calling for a married man, and, with the Yankee's native taste for trading, decided that the career of the merchant was the one that had the largest appeal to him. So he made immediate steps in that direction.

The record of that early Boston store is meagre. It is enough, perhaps, to say here and now that it failed, and that if its collapse had really dismayed the young merchant, this book would not have been written. As it was, the failure seemed but to stir him toward renewed efforts. He stood in the back of his little store and flipped a coin. It was a habit of his in all periods of indecision.

"Heads up, and I go north," said he. "Tails and next week I start south."

Heads came. And Rowland Macy and his wife went north. They went to Haverhill and there upon the bank of the Merrimac he set up his second store. This venture was far more successful than the first. It prospered, if not in large degree, at least far enough to encourage its proprietor. But he did not cease regretting that the coin had not come tails-up. Then he would have gone to New York. For New York, he was convinced, was about to become the undisputed metropolis of the land. Already it was going ahead,

by leaps and bounds. And men who slipped into it quickly and who possessed the right qualities of commercial ability would go ahead quickly. Rowland Macy was convinced of this.

He was not a man who lost much time in vain repinings. To New York he would go. He suited action to thought, sold his Haverhill business at a fair profit, again bundled his wife and small family together and set out for the metropolis of the New World.

II. The New York That Macy First Saw

IN 1858 New York was just beginning to come into its own. It was ceasing to be an overgrown town—half village, half city—and was attaining a real metropolitanism. It had already reached a population of 650,000 persons, and was adding to that number at the rate of from twelve thousand to fifteen thousand annually. Its real and personal property was assessed at upward of $513,000,000. New building was going apace at a fearful rate. Already the town was fairly closely builded up to Forty-ninth Street, and was paved to Forty-second. Above it up on Manhattan Island were many suburban villages: Bloomingdale, where Mayor Fernando Wood had his residence, upon a plot about the size of the present crossing of Broadway and Seventy-second Street, Yorkville, Harlem and Manhattanville. To reach the first two of these communities one could take certain of the horse railroads. John Stephenson had perfected his horse-car and these modern equipages—how quaint and old-fashioned they would seem today—were already plying in Second, Third, Sixth, Eighth and Ninth Avenues. Slowly but surely they were displacing the omnibuses, which dated back more than half a century. A goodly number of these still remained, however; twenty-six lines employ-

ing in all 489 separate stages—New York certainly was a considerable town.

To reach the more remote communities of Manhattan Island—Harlem or Manhattanville—one took the steam-cars: either the trains of the Hudson River Railroad in the little old station at Chambers Street and West Broadway, from which they proceeded up to the west side of the island and, as to this day, through a goodly portion of Tenth Avenue, or else the trains of the New York & Harlem, or the New York & New Haven, from their separate terminals back of the City Hall and Canal Street up through Fourth Avenue, the tunnel under Yorkville Hill and thence across the Harlem Plain to the river of the same name. A little later these railroads were to consolidate their terminals, in a huge block-square structure at Madison and Fourth Avenues, Twenty-sixth and Twenty-seventh Streets, the forerunner of the present Madison Square Garden; but the first of the three successive Grand Central Stations was not to come until 1871.

Fifth Avenue, too, was just beginning to come into its own. Some of the handsome homes in the lower reaches of that thoroughfare and upon the northern edge of Washington Square which have been suffered to remain until this day had already been built and an exodus had begun to them from the older houses to the south. All of the churches were gone from down town with but a few exceptions, the most conspicuous of which were the two Episcopalian churches in Broadway—Trinity and St. Paul's—the Roman Catholic Church of St. Peter's in Barclay Street, St. George's in

Beekman, the North Dutch in William, the Middle Dutch in Nassau and the Brick Presbyterian, also in Beekman Street. This last, in fact, had already been sold for secular purposes and had been abandoned. The congregation was building a new house up in the fields at Fifth Avenue and Thirty-eighth Street, a step which was regarded by its older members as extremely radical and precarious, to put it mildly. The ancient home of the Middle Dutch Reformed had also gone for secular purposes. In it was housed the New York Post Office, already a brisk place, which soon was to outgrow its overcrowded quarters and to expand into its ugly citadel at the apex of the City Hall Park.

The two great fires—the one in 1833 and the other in 1845—had removed from the lower portions of the city many of their more ancient and unsightly structures. The rebuilding which had followed them gave to the growing town much larger structures of a finer and more dignified architecture. Six and seven story buildings were quite common. This represented the practical limitations of a generation which knew not elevators, although the new Fifth Avenue Hotel which already was being planned upon the site of the old Hippodrome, at Broadway and Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth Streets, was soon to have the first of these contraptions that the world had ever seen.

Gone, too, were other old landmarks of downtown—some of them in their day distinctly famous—the City Hall, the Union Hotel, the Tontine Coffee House, the Bridewell and the reservoir of the Manhattan Company in Chambers Street. The new Croton Works, with

their wonderful aqueduct, the High Bridge, upon which it crossed the ravine of the Harlem, and the dual reservoirs at Forty-second Street and at Eighty-sixth, had rendered this last structure obsolete. The State Prison had disappeared from its former site at the foot of East Twenty-third Street. A new group of structures at Sing Sing had replaced the old upon the island of Manhattan.

Even then the elegant New York was moving rapidly uptown. Union Square, still known, however, to older New Yorkers as Union Place, was the heart of its life and fashion. It was lined by the fine houses of the elect and two of the most superb hotels of the metropolis, the Brevoort and the Union Square, while the Clarendon, which was destined soon to house the young Prince of Wales, stood but a block away. At Irving Place and Fourteenth and Fifteenth Streets had just been completed the new Academy of Music. New York at last had a real opera-house, with a stage and fittings large enough and adequate to present music-drama upon a scale equal to that of the larger European capitals. She had plenty of theaters, too: the Broadway, the Bowery, Laura Keene's, Niblo's Garden, and Wood & Christy's Negro Minstrels, chief amongst them. While down at the point where Chatham Street (now Park Row) debouched into Broadway, Barnum's Museum already stood, with its gay bannered front beckoning eagerly to the countrymen.

And how the countrymen did flock into New York—in those serene and busy days before the coming of a

tragic war. New York harbor was a busy place. For not all of them came by the well-filled trains of the three railroads that reached in upon Manhattan Island. There were sailing-ships and steamboats a plenty bumping their noses against the overcrowded piers of the growing city; ferries from Brooklyn and Williamsburgh and Jersey City and Hoboken and Astoria and Staten Island; steamboat lines down the harbor to Amboy and to Newark and to Elizabethtown; and up the Sound to Fall River, to Providence and to the Connecticut ports. But the finest steamers of all plied the Hudson. There the rivalry was keenest, the opportunities for profit apparently the greatest. And despite the fact that New York was already the port of many important ocean lines—the Cunard, the Collins, the Glasgow, the Havre, the Hamburg and the Panama steamers, for the fast-growing fame of the metropolis of the New World was already attracting great numbers of travelers from overseas—the fact also remains that when the *Daniel Drew*, of the Albany Night Line, was first built, in 1863, she exceeded in size and in passenger-carrying capacity any ocean liner plying in and out of the port of New York.

So came the countrymen and the residents of the other smaller towns and cities of the land, along with many, many foreigners, to this new vortex of humanity. They found their way, not alone to the hotels of the Union Square district, but to such equally distinguished houses as the Astor, the Brevoort, the St. Nicholas, the Metropolitan, the New York. They went to the theaters and almost invariably they climbed the brown-

stone spire of old Trinity, in order to drink in the view that it commanded: the wide sweep of busy city close at hand, the more distant ranges of the upper and lower harbors, the North and the East Rivers, Long Island, Staten Island, New Jersey and the western slopes of the Orange Mountains. And some, loving New York and realizing the fair opportunities that it offered, came to stay.

In among this throng of folk who rushed into the town in 1858 there came—among those who came to stay—Rowland H. Macy. The partial success of his Haverhill store, to an extent overbalancing the initial failure in Boston, had brought him into the metropolis of America, the city of wider, if indeed not unlimited opportunity. In those days there were few large stores in New York; nothing to be in the least compared with its great department stores of today. One heard of its hotels, its churches, its theaters, its banks, but very little indeed of its mercantile establishments. They were, for the most part, very small and exceedingly individual. They were known as shops and well deserved that title. There were a few exceptions, of course: A. T. Stewart's—still on Broadway between Worth and Chambers Streets—Ridley's, Lord & Taylor's and John Daniell's in Grand Street (this last at Broadway), McNamee & Company's, Arnold, Constable & Co., McCreery's, Hearn's, and one or two others, perhaps, of particular distinction.

It is hardly possible that Macy, as he found his way into these larger establishments, believed that he might

ever in his own enterprise match their elegance and distinction. It is difficult to believe that in those very earliest days he had the vision of a department store. At any rate the extremely modest establishment which he opened at 204 Sixth Avenue, between Thirteenth and Fourteenth Streets, in conjunction with his brother-in-law, Samuel S. Houghton, devoted itself at first, and for a long time afterward, exclusively to the sale of fancy goods. For specializing was the fashion of that day and generation; John Daniell sold nothing but ribbons and trimmings then; Aiken laces, and Stewart's chiefly dress-goods.

Yet Macy had vision. The department store idea must slowly have forced itself into his mind. For, five years later, we find his small business, originally on Sixth Avenue, just a door or two below Fourteenth Street, expanding so rapidly that he was forced to secure more room for it. And this despite the fact that not only was he two long blocks distant from Broadway but the particular corner which he had chosen for his store was known locally as unlucky—two or three other stores had gone bankrupt on it. Macy had no intention of going bankrupt. He added to his original shop the store at 62 West Fourteenth Street, at right angles to and connecting in the rear with it, and in this he installed a department of hats and millinery. He was beginning to come and come quickly—this country merchant to whom at first New York refused to extend either recognition or credit.

Now was the complete department store idea fairly launched, for the first time in the history of America,

if not in the entire world. Yet, when one came to fair and final analysis, it represented nothing else than the country-store of the small town or cross-roads greatly expanded in volume. And so, after all, it is barely possible that the canny New Englander may have had the germ of his surpassing idea implanted in his mind, a full decade or more before he had the opportunity to make use of it. Incidentally, it may be set down here, that Mr. Macy in the rapidly recurring trips to Paris which he found necessary to make in the interest of his business developed a great admiration for the Bon Marché of that city. He studied its methods carefully and adopted them whenever he found the opportunity.

From hats to dress-goods—the addition of still another adjoining store was inevitable—came as a fairly natural sequence. And one finds the successful young merchant who had had the enterprise and the initiative to leave Broadway—supposedly the supreme shopping street of the New York of that day—laying in his stocks of alpaca, of black bombazine, of silks and muslins, sheetings and pillow-cases and all that with these go. The idea once born was adhered to. As it broadened it gained prosperity. And as a natural sequence there came gradually and with a further steady enlargement of the premises, jewelry, toilet-goods and the so-called Vienna goods. Toys were added in 1869, and gradually house-furnishing goods, confectionery, soda water, books and stationery, boys' clothing, ladies' underwear, crockery, glassware, silver-

ware, boots and shoes, dress-goods, dressmaking, ready-to-wear clothing, and, in due time, a restaurant.

For many years it was the only store in town to carry soaps and perfumes. This, of itself, brought to the store a clientele of its own—the most beautiful women of New York, among the most notable of them, Rose Eytinge, the actress, who was just then coming to the pinnacle of her fame.

Mr. Macy, accompanied by his wife and daughter—the latter of whom is still alive at an advanced age—took up his residence at first over the store and then, a little later, in a small house in West Twelfth Street, within easy walking distance of his place of business. From this he afterward moved to a larger residence in West Forty-ninth Street. He was a man of sturdy build, of more than medium height and thick-set, extremely affable in manner. He wore a heavy beard, and an old employee of the store was wont to liken his appearance to that of the poet, Longfellow. His tendency toward black cigars and to appearing in the store in his shirt-sleeves did not heighten the resemblance, however.

He was a man of almost indomitable will. Such a quality was quite as necessary for success in those days as in these. The modern ideas of beneficence and generosity to the employee were little dreamed of then. The successful merchant, like the successful manufacturer or the successful banker, drove his men and drove them hard. Macy was no exception to this rule. If he had been, it is doubtful if he would have lasted

long. For while '58 was a year of seeming prosperity in New York it also followed directly one of the notable panic-years in the financial history of the United States and was soon to be followed by four years of internecine struggle in the nation—in which its credit and financial resources were to be strained to the utmost.

It is entirely possible that the record of the Macy store might not be set down as one of final and overwhelming success, if it had not been for the driving force of a woman, who was brought into the organization not long after the opening of the original store in lower Sixth Avenue. This woman, Margaret Getchell, was also born in Nantucket. She had been a school-teacher upon the island, until the loss of one of her eyes forced her to seek less confining work. She drifted to New York and, taking advantage of a girlhood acquaintance with Mr. Macy, asked him for employment in his store. He knew her and was glad to take her in. She, in turn, engaged rooms in a flat just over a picture-frame store, in Sixth Avenue, across from her employment, so that she might devote every possible moment of her time, day and night, to its success.

So was born a real executive—and in a day when the possibilities of women ever becoming business executives were as remote seemingly as that they might ever fly. For decades after she had gone, she left the impress of her remarkable personality upon the store. An attractive figure she was: a small, slight woman, with masses of glorious hair and a pert upturn to her

nose, while the loss of her eye was overcome, from the point of view of appearance at least, by the wearing of an artificial one, which she handled so cleverly that many folk knew her for a long time without realizing her misfortune.

At every turn, Margaret Getchell was a clever woman. Once when Mr. Macy had imported a wonderful mechanical singing-bird—a thing quite as unusual in that early day as was the phonograph when it came upon the market—and its elaborate mechanism had slipped out of order, it was she, with the aid of a penknife, a screw-driver and a pair of pliers—I presume that she also used a hair-pin—who took it entirely apart and put it together again. And at another time she trained two cats to permit themselves to be arrayed in doll's clothing and to sleep for hours in twin-cribs, to the great amusement and delectation of the visitors to the store. Later she caused a photograph to be made of the exhibit, which was retailed in great quantities to the younger customers. Miss Getchell was nothing if not businesslike.

It was her keen, commercial acumen that made her alert in the heart center of the early store—the cashier's office. She tolerated neither discrepancies nor irregularities there. There it was that the New England school-ma'm showed itself most keenly. Did a saleswoman overcharge a patron two dollars? And did the cashier accept and pass the check? Then the cashier must pay the two dollars out of her meagre pay-envelope on Saturday night. "Overs" were treated the same as "unders." It made no difference that the

store was already ahead two dollars on the transaction. Discipline was the thing. Discipline would keep that sort of offense from being repeated many times, and Macy's from ever being given the unsavory reputation of making a practice of overcharging.

"Don't ever erase a figure or change it, no matter what seems to be the logical reason in your own mind," she kept telling her cashiers. "The very act implies dishonesty."

So does the New England conscience ever lean backward.

Yet it is related of this same Margaret Getchell that when a little and comparatively friendless girl had been admitted to the cashier's cage—a decided innovation in those days—and had been found in an apparent peculation of three dollars and promptly discharged by Mr. Macy, Miss Getchell dropped everything else and went to work on behalf of the little cashier. Intuitively she felt that another of her sex in the cage had made the theft—a young woman who had come into the store from a prominent up-state family to learn merchandising. The up-state young woman was fond of dress. Her dress demands far exceeded her salary. Of that Miss Getchell was sure.

Yet intuition is one thing and proof quite another. For a fortnight the store manager worked upon her surpassing problem. She induced Macy to suspend for a time his order of discharge and she kept putting the women cashiers in relays in the cage, to suit her own fancy and her own plans. The petty thefts continued. But not for long. The plans worked. The

THE BEGINNINGS OF MACY'S

The original small store in Sixth Avenue just south of 14th Street. Here the business starts in 1858

altered checks were found to be all in the time of one of the cashiers—and that was not the one who had been discharged. Miss Getchell drove to the home of Miss Upper New York and there, in the presence of her family, got both confession and reparation.

She was forever seeking new lines of activities for the store—branching out here, branching out there, and turning most of these new ventures into lines of resounding profits. "If necessary, we shall handle everything except one," she is reputed to have said. And upon being asked what that one was, she replied brusquely, "Coffins." Once she embarked Macy upon the grocery business—whole decades before the establishment of the present huge grocery department—and while eventually the store was forced to drop for a time this line of merchandise, she succeeded in taking so much business from New York's then leading firm of grocers that they came to Macy, himself, and begged him to drop the competition.

In the retailing world of that day, tradition and habit still governed and with an iron hand. Stores opened early in the morning and kept open until late in the evening, and did this six days of the week. Their workers rose and left their homes—before dawn in many months of the year—and did not return to them until well after dark. Yet they did not complain, for that was the fashion of the times and was recognized as such. Wages were as low as the hours were long. But food-costs also were low, and rentals but a tiny fraction of their present figure. The apartment

house had not yet come to New York. It was a development set for a full two decades later. The store-workers lived in boarding-houses, in small furnished rooms or with their families. The greater part of them resided within walking distance of their employment.

Mr. Macy had all of his fair share of traditional New England thrift. One of the favorite early anecdotes of "the old man," as his fellow-workers were prone to call him, and with no small show of affection, concerned his refusal to permit shades to be placed upon the gas-jets in the store, saying that he paid for the light and so wanted the full value for his money. He was skeptical, at the best, about innovations. Moreover, necessity compelled him to keep close watch upon the pennies. At one time he reduced the weekly wages of his cash-girls from two dollars to one-dollar-and-a-half, saying that the war was over and he could no longer afford to pay war wages. Yet when a courageous sales-clerk went to him and told him that she could not possibly live any longer upon her weekly wage of three dollars, he promptly raised it a dollar, without argument or hesitation. And the following week he automatically extended the same increase to every other clerk in the store.

Labor conditions in that day were hard, indeed. The working hours, as I have already said, were long. In regular times the store hours were from eight to six, instead of from nine to five-thirty, as today. On busy days the clerks worked an extra hour, putting the stock in place, while in the fortnight which preceded

Christmas the store was open evenings—supposedly until ten o'clock, as a matter of fact, often until long after ten, when the workers were well toward the point of exhaustion. Other conditions of their labor were slightly better. There were no seats in the aisles and conversation between the clerks was punishable by discharge. They might make their personal purchases only on Friday mornings, between eight and nine o'clock, and they received no discount whatsoever. In Mr. Macy's day the only discounts ever given were to the New York Juvenile Asylum in Thirteenth Street nearby, which was an institution peculiarly close to his heart.

There were no lockers in the early days of the old store. In one of its upper floors several small rooms were set aside as a crude sort of cloak-room for the employees. A few nails around the walls sufficed for their outer wraps but there were never enough of these nails to go around. One of the clerks was chosen to come early and stay late in order to supervise these rooms. Inasmuch as there was neither glory nor remuneration in this task, it was not eagerly sought after.

Nevertheless, here was the enlightened day at hand when women would and did work in stores—not alone in great numbers but in a great majority; and in many cases to the exclusion of men. It was one of the sweeping economic changes that the Civil War brought in its train. When the men must go to fight in the armies of the North, women must take their places—for only a little while it seemed up to that time. Yet

so well did they do much of men's work, that their retention in many of their positions came as a very natural course. So while the decade that preceded the Civil War found few or no professions open to women—save those of teaching or of domestic employment—the one which followed it found them coming in increasing numbers, into a steadily increasing number and variety of endeavors.

So it was then that the great war of the last century brought women behind the counters of the stores—Macy's was no exception to the invasion. They came to stay. And stay they have, to this very day, even though most of the New York stores still retain men to a considerable extent in some of their departments—notably those devoted to the sale of furniture, dress-goods and boots and shoes. For some varieties of stock the male clerk still is the most suitable and successful sort of salesman.

In his store in Haverhill, Mr. Macy had adopted as his trade-mark a rooster bearing the motto in his beak, "While I live, I'll crow." For his nascent enterprise in New York, however, he adopted a different and, to him at least, a far more significant device, which to this day remains the symbol of the great enterprise which still bears his name.

It was a star, a star of red, if you will. And back of that simple symbol rests a story: It seems that in the days of his youth when he sailed the northern seas in a whaling ship he had gradually acquired such proficiency that he was made first mate and then master.

It was in the earlier capacity, however, and upon an occasion when he was given a trick at the wheel that Macy found himself in a thick fog off a New England port—one version of the story says Boston, the other New Bedford. To catch the familiar lights of the harbor gateways was out of the question. The cloud banks lay low against the shore. Overhead there was a rift or two, and in one of them, well ahead of the vessel's prow, there gleamed a brilliant star.

For the young skipper this was literally a star of hope. His quick wit made it a guiding star. By it he steered his course and so successfully into the safety of the harbor that the star became for him thereafter the symbol of success. With the strange insistency that was inherent in the man, he was wont to say that the failure of his Boston store was due to the fact that he had not there adopted the star as his trade-mark. He made no such mistake in his New York enterprise. The star became the forefront of his business. And to this day it is a prominent feature of the main façade of the great establishment which bears his name.

Mr. Macy never lost his boyhood affection for the sea—the one thing inborn of his ancestral blood. It is related of him that one morning on his way to the store he found a small silver anchor lying on the sidewalk, picked it up, placed it in his pocket and thereafter carried it until the day of his death, regarding it as a talisman of real value. There was one souvenir of his early connection of which he was greatly ashamed, however. As a boy he had permitted his shipmates to tattoo the backs of his hands. In later years he re-

gretted this exceedingly, and developed a habit of talking to strangers with the palms of his hands held uppermost, so that they might not see the tattoo marks.

From the very beginning Macy adopted certain fixed and definite policies for his business. These showed not alone the vision but the breadth and bigness of the man. For one of the most important of them he decided that in his business he would have cash transactions only. This applied both ways—to the purchase of his merchandise as well as to its retail sale. It is a bed-rock principle that has come down to today as a foundation of the business that he founded. It is perhaps the one rule of it, from which there is no deviation, at any time or under any circumstance. It is related that a full quarter of a century after Macy had first adopted this principle, one of the then partners of the concern was approached by a warm personal friend, a man of high financial standing, who said that he wished to make a rather elaborate purchase that morning, but not having either cash or a check handy, asked for an exception to the no-credit rule. The partner shook his head, smiled, rather sadly, and said:

"No, Mr. Blank, I cannot do that, even for you. But I can tell you what I can, and shall do."

And so saying he reached for his own check-book, wrote out a personal voucher for two hundred dollars, stepped over to the cashier's office, had it cashed and presented the money, in crisp green bills to his friend.

"You can repay me, at your convenience," was all that he said.

Convinced that trust—as he insisted upon calling credit—was a millstone upon the neck of the merchant—let alone a struggling man of thirty-five who previously had known failure—Macy insisted upon matching his purchases for any ensuing week close to his sales for the preceding one. He did all his own buying at first; and for a number of years thereafter he employed no professional buyers whatsoever. In this way he kept his margin closely in hand and at all times well within the range of safety. There was little of the spirit of the gambler in him. It would not have sat well with his Yankee blood.

A second principle of the store in those early days which has come easily and naturally down to these—when it is accepted retailing principle everywhere—was the marking of the selling price upon each and every article. It seems odd to think today that the installing of such a fair and commonsense principle should once have been regarded as a stroke of daring initiative in merchandising. Yet the fact remains that in the days when Macy's was young, in the average store one bargained and bargained constantly. There was no single price set upon any article. Even when one went into as fine and showy a store as New York might boast one bartered. *Caveat emptor,* "Let the buyer beware," was seemingly the dominating retail motto of those days.

But not in Mr. Macy's. The selling price went on every article displayed in the store in those days and in such plain and readable figures that any fairly educated person might clearly understand. This principle alone

was one of the huge factors that went toward the early and immediate success of the enterprise.

There was still another merchandising idea born of that great and fertile New England brain that needs to be set down at this time. For many years a notable feature of the advertising of the Macy store has been in the peculiar shading of its prices—at forty-nine cents or ninety-eight, or at $1.98 or $4.98 or $9.98 rather than in the even multiples of dollars. A good many worldly-wise folk have jumped to the quick conclusion that this was due to a desire on the part of the store to make the selling price of any given article seem a little less than it really was. As a matter of fact it was due to nothing of the sort. With all of his respect for the honesty of his sales-force, the Yankee mind of R. H. Macy took few chances—even in that regard. He felt that in almost every transaction the money handed over by the customer would be in even silver coin or bills. To give back the change from an odd-figured selling-price the salesman or the saleswoman would be compelled to do business with the cashier and so to make a full record of the transaction. With the commodities in even dollars and their larger fractions the temptation to pocket the entire amount might be present.

It required a good deal of logic, or long-distance reasoning, to figure out such a possibility and an almost certain safeguard against it. But that was Macy. His was not the day of cash-registers or other checking devices. The salesman and the saleswoman in a store was still apt to find himself or herself an object of

suspicion on the part of his or her employer. Business ethics were still in the making. A long road in them was still to be traversed.

Mr. Macy's brother-in-law, Mr. Houghton, did not long remain in partnership with him, but retired to Boston, where he became senior partner of the house of Houghton & Dutton, which is still in existence. For a long number of years thereafter Macy conducted his business alone. Its steadily increasing growth, however, the multiplication of its responsibilities and problems, and his own oncoming years finally caused him to admit to partnership on the first day of January, 1877, two of his oldest and most valued employees, Abiel T. LaForge and Robert M. Valentine. It had long been rumored in the store that Miss Getchell's years of faithful service were finally to be rewarded by a real partnership in it. But even in 1876, woman's place in modern business had not been firmly enough established to permit so radical a step by a business house of as large ramifications and responsibilities as Macy's had come to be. Yet the point was quickly overcome—and in a most unexpected way. Early in 1876 Miss Getchell became Mr. LaForge's wife. And so, in a most active and interested way, she gained at the end a real financial interest in the profitable business, in the upbuilding of which she had been so large a factor.

Mr. LaForge had been a major in the Northern Army during the Civil War; in fact it was there that he had contracted the tuberculosis which was to cause

his early demise. He had come into the store in the middle of the 'seventies as one of its first professional buyers—being a specialist in laces—and had developed real executive ability. He had great affection for things military. And when Mr. Macy told him of the uniformed attendants of his beloved Bon Marché, LaForge promptly proceeded to place the entire sales-force of Macy's in uniform. Neat uniforms they were, too: of a bluish-grey cadet cloth, and with stiff upstanding collars of a much darker blue upon the points of which were interwoven the familiar device of the bright red star. The Macy uniforms did not long remain, however. New York is not Paris. And in that day, when uniforms in general were looked upon as something quite foreign to the idea of the republic, American labor was particularly averse to them.

His important partnership step taken, Mr. Macy began to lay down his responsibilities. Despite his great fame and vigorous constitution his health had begun to fail under the multiplicity of duties. Again he turned toward the sea. He embarked upon a long voyage to Europe; in which he was to combine both business and pleasure. From that voyage he never returned. His health sank rapidly and he died in Paris, on the twenty-ninth day of March, 1877.

Two days later in New York, Mr. LaForge and Mr. Valentine formed a partnership, Mr. LaForge, although the younger of the two men, becoming the senior member of the firm. It was provided in the

co-partnership papers that the business should be continued under the name of R. H. Macy & Co., until January 1, 1879; and thereafter under the new firm name of LaForge and Valentine. However, Mr. LaForge's death in 1878, followed a year later by that of his wife, prevented this scheme from being carried out. The question of changing the name of a well-established business—now come to be one of the great enterprises of the city of New York—was never again brought forward. The name of Macy had attained far too fine a trade value to be easily dropped, even if sentiment had not come into the reckoning. And sentiment still ruled the big retail house in lower Sixth Avenue, sentiment demanded that the name of one of New York's greatest merchant princes should be henceforth perpetuated in the business which he had so solidly founded. And so that name continues—in growing strength and prosperity.

III. Fourteenth Street Days

BY 1883 the Macy store had rounded out its first quarter century of existence. The big, comfortable, homely group of red brick buildings on Sixth Avenue from Thirteenth to Fourteenth Streets had come to be as much a real landmark of New York as the Grand Central Depot, Grace Church, Booth's Theater, the Metropolitan Opera House or the equally new Casino Theater in upper Broadway. Its founder had been dead for six years. But the business marched steadily on—growing steadily both in its scope and in its volume. It already was among the first, if not the very first in New York, in the variety and the magnitude of its operations. It employed more than fifteen hundred men and women, a great growth since 1870 when an early payroll of the store had shown but one hundred on its employment list.

Other stores had followed closely upon the heels of Macy's. Stewart's had moved up Broadway from Chambers Street to its wonderful square iron emporium between Ninth and Tenth Streets, where, after the death of the man who had established it, it enjoyed varying success for a long time until its final resuscitation by that great Philadelphia merchant, John Wanamaker. Benjamin Altman had moved his store from its original location on Third Avenue to Sixth

Avenue and Eighteenth Street, Koch was at Nineteenth Street, but Ehrich was still over on Eighth Avenue. None of these had been an important merchant in the beginning. But all of them, by 1883, were beginning to come into their own. The Sixth Avenue shopping district of the 'eighties and the 'nineties was being born. Mr. Macy's vision of more than twenty-five years years before was being abundantly justified. The new elevated railroad, which formed the backbone of Sixth Avenue and which had been completed about a decade before, all the way from South Ferry to One Hundred and Fifty-fifth Street, had proved a mighty factor in bringing shoppers into it. Mr. Macy in 1858 might not have foreseen the coming of this remarkable system of rapid transit—the first of its kind in any large city of the world. But he foresaw the coming of both Sixth Avenue and Fourteenth Street. There is no doubt of that. He had a habit of reiterating his prophecy to all with whom he came in contact.

The prophecy came to pass. Union Square no longer was surrounded by fine residences. Trade had invaded it, successfully. Tiffany's, Brentano's, *The Century's* fine publishing house had come to replace the homes of the old time New Yorkers. So, too, had Fourteenth Street been transformed. Delmonico's was still at one of its Fifth Avenue corners and back of it stood, and still stands, the Van Buren residence, a sort of Last of the Mohicans in brick and stone and timber and plaster. All the rest was business; high-grade business, if you please, and Macy's stood in the very heart of it.

We saw, in a preceding chapter, how just before the passing of Mr. Macy he had taken into partnership Mr. LaForge and Mr. Valentine. Mr. LaForge, as we have just seen, lived hardly a year after Mr. Macy's death in Paris, and Mr. Valentine died less than a twelvemonth later—on February 15, 1879. Yet the force and impress of both of these men remained with the organization for a long time after their going. Miss Prunty, one of the older members of it, still remembers as one of her earliest recollections, seeing Mr. LaForge taking groups of the cash-girls out to supper during the racking holiday season. The little girls were duly grateful. Theirs was a drab existence, at the best; long hours and wearying ones. A type that has quite passed out of existence—in these days of automatic carriers—that old-time cash girl in the big store, with her red-checked gingham frock and her hair in pig-tails, which had a fashion of sticking straight out from her small head. Lunch in a small tin pail and a vast ambition, which led many and many a one of them into positions of real trust and responsibility.

The most of them continued in the business of merchandising. They rose rapidly to be saleswomen, buyers and department managers—not alone in Macy's; but in the other great stores of the city. A Macy training became recognized as a business schooling of the greatest value. While at least one of these Macy graduates—Carrie DeMar—came to be an actress of nation-wide reputation, a comedienne of real merit.

There were times when the existence of these smart, pert little girls grew less drab. One of them told me

not so long ago of the *entente cordiale* which she had upbuilded between Mr. S—— and herself; nearly fifty years ago.

"Mr. S—— was the only floorwalker that the store possessed in those days," said she. "Mr. Macy had been much impressed by his fine appearance and had created the post for him. On duty, he seemed a most solemn man. That was a part of his work. Behind it all he was most human, however; and sometimes on a hot day in midsummer he would begin to think of the cooling lager that flowed at The Grapevine, a few blocks down the avenue. That settled it. He would have to slip down there for five minutes. And slip down he did, while I stood guard at the Thirteenth Street door. I felt that Miss Getchell's far-seeing eye was forever upon us or that Mr. Macy might turn up quite unexpectedly.

"In return for all this, Mr. S—— would occasionally stand guard while I would slip over to John Huyler's bakery at Eighth Avenue and Fourteenth Street—sometimes to get one of his wonderful pies, and other times to buy the lovely new candies upon which he was beginning to experiment. We were great pals—S—— and I."

Nowadays in the great department stores they order this entire business of collecting both cash and packages in a far better fashion. The merchant of today has a variety of wondrous mechanical contraptions—not only cash-carriers but cash-registers—which do the work they once did, much more rapidly and efficiently.

THE FOURTEENTH STREET STORE OF OTHER DAYS

By the early 'seventies Macy's had absorbed the entire southeastern corners of 14th Street and 6th Avenue, and had come to be a fixture of New York

Even in those long ago days of the 'eighties the Macy store was beginning to install pneumatic tubes for carrying the money from the saleswomen at the counters to the high-set booths of the head cashiers, who seemingly had come to regard it as a mere commodity, to be regarded in as fully impersonal a fashion as boots or shoes or sugar or broom-sticks. Put that down as progress for the 'eighties.

The Macy store prided itself during that second generation, as now, upon its willingness to take up innovations, particularly when they showed themselves as possessing at least a degree of real worth. Mr. Macy, with his old fashioned prejudices against innovations of any sort, was gone. His successors took a radically different position in regard to them. Here was the electric-light—that brand-new thing which this young man Tom Edison over at Menlo Park was developing so rapidly. It was new. It had been well advertised; particularly well advertised for that day and generation. How it drew folk, to gaze admiringly upon its hissing brilliancy! Ergo! The Macy store must have an electric light. And so in the late autumn days of 1878 one of the very first arc lamps to be displayed in New York was hung outside the Fourteenth Street front of the store and attracted many crowds. It was hardly less than a sensation.

In the following autumn arc lamps were placed throughout all the retail selling portions of the store. Of course, they were not very dependable. Most folk those days thought that they would never so become. The store's real reliance was upon its gas-lighting;

nice, reliable old gas. You could depend upon it. The new system was still erratic. So figured the mind of the 'eighties.

Soon after the first electric lamps, the store's first telephone was installed. It, too, was a great novelty, and the customers of the establishment developed a habit of calling up their friends, just so that they could say they had used it. Eventually the convenience of the device became so apparent that folk stood in queues awaiting their turn to use it, and the telephone company requested Macy's to take it out or at least to discontinue the practice of using it so freely.

In that day there were no elevators nor for a considerable time thereafter. All the store's selling was at first, and for a long time thereafter, confined to its basement and to its main-floor. Gradually it began to encroach upon small portions of the second story. This afforded fairly generous selling space; for it must be remembered that the establishment not only filled the entire east side of Sixth Avenue from Thirteenth Street to Fourteenth Street but extended back upon each of them for more than one hundred and fifty feet. Moreover it was beginning slowly to acquire disconnected buildings in the surrounding territory; generally for the purpose of manufacturing certain lines of merchandise—a practice which it has almost entirely discontinued in these later years. Then it still made certain things that it wished fashioned along the lines which its clientele still demanded. And even some of the upper floors of the older buildings that formed the main store group were partly given over

to the making of clothing; of underwear; and men's shirts and collars in particular.

It was after 1882, according to the memory of Mr. James E. Murphy, a salesman in the black silk department, who came to the store in that memorable year, that the first elevator was installed in the store. Up to that time, as we have just seen, there had been no necessity whatsoever for such a machine. But the steadily growing business of the store—there really seemed to be no way of holding Macy's back—made it necessary to use upper floors of the original building for retailing and more and more to crowd the manufacturing and other departments into outside structures.

So Macy's progressed. It kept its selling methods as well as its stock, not only abreast of the times, but a little ahead of them. Miss Fallon, who was in the shoe department of those days of the 'eighties, recalls that up to that time the shoes had been kept in large chiffoniers—the sizes "2½" to "3½" in one drawer, "4" to "5" in the next, and so on. This meant that if a clerk was looking for a certain specified width—say "D" or "Double A"—she must rummage through the entire drawer until she came to a pair which had the required size neatly marked upon its lining. The mating of the shoes was accomplished by boring small awl holes in their backs and tying them neatly together. There was no repair shop in the shoe department of that day—merely an aged shoemaker who lived in a basement across Thirteenth Street and to whom shoes for repair were despatched almost as rapidly as they came into the store.

These methods seem crude today. But, even in 1883, they were in full keeping with the times. Merchandising was still in its swaddling clothes; the real science of salesmanship, a thing unknown. Yet men were groping through; and some of these men were in Macy's. You might take as such a man C. B. Webster, who came to the forefront of the business, soon after the deaths of Macy, LaForge and Valentine at the end of its second decade. In fact, his actual admission to the partnership preceded Mr. Valentine's death by a few months. A while later he married Mr. Valentine's widow. And when the last of the old partners was gone his was the steering hand upon the brisk and busy ship.

To help him in his work he brought to his right hand Jerome B. Wheeler, who was admitted as a full partner April 1, 1879, and who so continued until his complete retirement from business, December 31, 1887. Mr. Webster continued with the house for a considerably longer time, maintaining his active partnership until 1896 when he sold his interest in the business to his partners. He continued, however, to retain his private office in the Macy store, coming north with it from Fourteenth Street to Thirty-fourth in 1902, and, until his death four or five years ago, staying close beside the enterprise in which he had been so large a creative factor.

Webster and Wheeler are, then, the names most prominently connected with the second era of the store's growth and activity. They were bound to the founder of the house by blood-ties and by marriage.

Mr. Webster's father—Josiah Locke Webster, a merchant of Providence, R. I.—and Mr. Macy were first cousins, their mothers having been sisters. The elder Webster and Rowland H. Macy were, in fact, the warmest of friends and so the proffer by the original proprietor of the store of an opening to his friend's son, came almost as a matter of course. Its educational value alone was enormous. Young Webster accepted. He joined the organization in 1876 and a year later was made one of its buyers. His worth quickly began to assert itself. And within another twelvemonth he had abandoned all idea of returning to his father's store in Providence and entered upon a partnership in the Macy business.

Many of the older employees of the store still remember him distinctly. He was a tall man, stately, conservative in speech and in manner—your typical successful man of business of that time and generation. Yet these very Macy people will tell you today that while his dignity awed, it did not repress. For with it went a kindliness of manner and of purpose. Nor was he—as some of them were then inclined to believe—devoid of any sense of humor. Mr. James Woods, who is assistant superintendent of delivery in the store today and who has been with it for forty-eight years, recalls many and many a battle royal with "C. B. W." as he still calls his old associate and chief, which they had together as they worked in the delivery rooms of the old Fourteenth Street store, hurling packages at one another and then following up with smart fisticuffs.

"In those early days," adds George L. Hammond,

who came to the store in 1886 and who is now in its woolen dress-goods department, "I found Mr. Webster a most kindly man, even though taciturn. For instance, one day Mr. Isidor Straus came up to the counter with a man whom he had met upon the floor. They stood talking together. Mr. Straus told the other gentleman that he had recently met a Mr. Cebalos, known at that time as the Cuban Sugar King, and that Mr. Cebalos had spoken to him of having met such a fine gentleman, an American, in France; that this gentleman was evidently a man of education and large means and had said that he was in business in New York. Mr. Cebalos asked Mr. Straus if he had ever known his chance acquaintance in Paris—he was a Mr. Webster, Mr. C. B. Webster. To which Mr. Straus instantly replied: 'Of course I know him. He is the senior member of our firm.' Mr. Cebalos answered: 'What, the senior member of the firm of R. H. Macy & Co.? Why, he never told me that!'"

So much for old-fashioned modesty and conservatism.

The habit of reticence enclosed many of these older executives of Macy's. They were silent oft-times because they could not forget their vast responsibilities—even when they were away from the store. It is told of one of them that once in the middle of the performance in an uptown theater the thought flashed over him that he had neglected to close his safe—a duty which was never relegated to any subordinate. He arose at once from his seat and hurried down to the store, brought the night watchman to the doors and

strode quickly to the private office: only to find the stout doors of its great strong-box firmly fastened. The idea that he had neglected his duty was a nervous obsession. His was not the training nor the mentality that ever neglected duty.

Upon another occasion another partner (Mr. Wheeler) worried himself almost into a nervous breakdown for fear that there would not be enough pennies for the cashier's cage during the forthcoming holiday season. Mr. Macy's odd-price plan was something of a drain upon the copper coin market of New York. And at this particular time, the local shortage being acute, Mr. Wheeler took a night train and hurried to Washington, to see the Secretary of the Treasury. Late the next evening he returned to New York and went to the house of Miss Abbie Golden, his head cashier, at midnight, just to tell her that he had succeeded in getting an order upon the director of the Philadelphia Mint for $10,000 in brand-new copper pennies. After which he went home, to a well-earned rest.

Although Mr. Wheeler's connection with the store was for a much shorter period, he left upon it, at the end of its second era, much of the impress of his own personality. Like both Webster and Valentine, he also was indirectly related to R. H. Macy, having married Mr. Macy's niece, Miss Valentine. In appearance and in manner he was the direct antithesis of his partner, Webster. In the language of today he was a "mixer." Affable, direct, approachable, men liked him and came

to him freely. The employees of the store poured their woes into his ears; and never in vain. He stood ready to help them, in every possible way. And they, knowing this, came frequently to him.

Mr. Wheeler left the store and organization in 1887, selling his interest in the enterprise to Messrs. Isidor and Nathan Straus—of whom much more in a very few moments. He became tremendously interested in the development of Colorado and, upon going out there in 1888, built up a chain of stores, banks and mines. He still lives in the land of his adoption.

One of Mr. Wheeler's keenest interests in the store was in its toy department. In this he followed closely Macy's own trend of thought and desire. For Macy's had already become, beyond a doubt, *the* toy-store of New York City. Starting eleven years after the foundation of the original store, this one department had so grown and expanded as annually to demand and receive the entire selling-space of the main floor. Each year, about the fifteenth of December, all other stocks would be cleared from shelves and counters, the willow-feathers, the fans and the fine laces would disappear from the little glass cases beside the main Fourteenth Street doors and in their places would come the toys—a goodly company in all, but strange—dolls, engines, blocks, mechanical devices, books.

And then, to the doors of the great red-brick emporium in Sixth Avenue would come New York Jr. He and she came afoot and in carriages, upon horse-cars of the surface railways and upon the steam-cars of

the elevated, and before they entered stood for a moment at the great glass windows that completely surrounded the place. For there was spread to view a pantomime of the most enchanting sort. No theater might equal the annual Christmas window display of Macy's. No theater might even dream of creating such a vast and overwhelming spectacle. The Hippodrome of today was still nearly thirty years into the future.

The responsibilities of this vast undertaking alone were all but overwhelming. The twenty-fifth of December was barely passed, the store hardly cleaned of all the debris and confusion that it had brought, before plans for another Christmas were actively under way; Miss Bowyer, who specialized in the window display, taking Mr. Wheeler up to the wax-figure experts of Eden Musee in Twenty-third Street to order the saints and sinners and famous folk generally who came to the window annually at the end of December. One of the present executives of Macy's can remember being privileged, as a small boy, to go behind the scenes of the window pantomime. There he saw it, not in its beauty of form and color and light, but as a bewildering perplexity of mechanisms—belts and pulleys and levers and cams—an enterprise of no little magnitude.

While Miss Bowyer and her assistants were busy laying the first of the plans for another window display, Mr. Macy was off for Europe seeking a fresh supply of toys and novelties for New York Jr.'s own annual festival. Once in a while he touched a high

level of novelty, such as the securing of the mechanical bird—which a moment ago we saw Margaret Getchell taking all to pieces and then placing the pieces together again, with all the celerity and precision of a Yankee mechanic. The mechanical bird appealed particularly to Mr. Macy's friend, Mr. Phineas T. Barnum. Mr. Barnum came often to the store in Fourteenth Street to gaze upon it and to listen to it. Perhaps he regretted that he had let so valuable an advertising feature slip out of the hands of his museum.

For Mr. Macy's chief reason in importing a toy so rare and so expensive as to bring it far beyond the hands of any ordinary child was to create sensation—and so to gain advertising thereby. The merchant from out of New England was nothing if not a born advertiser. While his competitors were quite content with small and stilted announcements in the public prints as to the extent and variety of their wares, Macy splurged. He took "big space"—big at least for that day and generation. And he did not hesitate to let printer's ink carry the fame of his emporium far and wide—a sound business principle which has prevailed in it from that day to this.

But the toy season was never passed without its doubts and worries. An older employee of the store can still remember a most memorable year when it rained for a solid week after the toy season had opened and the bombazines and the muslins had been put away for the building-blocks and the hobby-horse. No one came to the store for seven long days. Mr. Macy was greatly distressed. He walked up one aisle and down

another, stroking his long silky beard and saying that he was utterly ruined, and would have to close his store forthwith. But on the eighth day the sun came out, a season of fine crisp December weather arrived and the store was thronged with holiday shoppers. A fortnight's buying was accomplished in the passing of a single week and the situation completely saved.

IV. The Coming of Isidor and Nathan Straus

DURING the era in which Webster and Wheeler controlled it, the Macy store may be fairly said to have been in a state of hiatus. The driving force of its founders—Rowland Macy, LaForge and his wife and Valentine—was somewhat spent. And nothing had come to replace it. The store went ahead, of course—Webster and Wheeler were both hard workers and well-schooled—but keen observers noticed that it traveled quite largely upon the impetus and momentum which it had derived from its founders. New minds and hands to direct, new arms to strike and to strike strongly were needed and greatly needed. These new minds and hands and arms it was about to receive. But before we come to their consideration we shall turn back the calendar—for nearly forty years.

It was in 1848 that the German Revolution drove out from the Fatherland and into other countries great numbers of men and women. The United States received its fair share of these; the most of them young men, impetuous, enterprising, idealistic. The late Carl Schurz was a fair representative of this type. About him were grouped in turn a small group of men, who might be regarded fairly as the most energetic and

successful of the expatriates. In this group one of the most distinctive was one Lazarus Straus, who had been a sizable farmer in the Rhine Palatinate—at that time under the French flag—and who brought with him his three small sons, Isidor, Nathan and Oscar. In their veins was an admixture of French and German blood.

In 1919 when Oscar S. Straus attended the Paris Peace Conference as the Chairman of the League to Enforce Peace, a dinner was given to him in Paris at which Leon Bourgeois, the former Premier of France and the present Chairman of the Council of the League of Nations, presided. In his address he referred to the fact that the father of the guest of honor, Oscar S. Straus, was born a French subject.

To America, then, came Lazarus Straus and later his little family, as many and many an immigrant has come, before and since—seeking his fortune and asking no odds save a fair opportunity and a freedom from persecution. They landed in Philadelphia, where a little inquiry, among old friends who had come to the United States a few years before, developed the fact that the best business opportunities of the moment seemed to center in the South. Oglethorpe, Ga., was regarded by them as a particularly good town. With this fact established, Lazarus Straus started South and did not end his travels until he had reached Georgia, then popularly regarded as its "empire state." Through Georgia he found his way slowly, a small stock of goods with him and selling as he went in order to make his meagre living expenses, until he was come

to Talbot County, which proudly announced itself as "the empire county of the empire state."

It was in court-week that Lazarus Straus first marched into Talboton, its shire-town, and took a good long look at his surroundings. At first glance he liked it. It was brisk and busy; if you have been in an old-fashioned county-seat in court-week you will quickly recall what a lot of enterprise and bustle that annual or semi-annual event arouses. But that was not all. Talboton did not have the slovenly look of so many of the small Southern towns of that period. It was trim and neat; its houses and lawns and flower-pots alike were well-kept. It must have brought back to the lonely heart of the man from the Palatinate the neat small towns of his Fatherland. Moreover it possessed an excellent school system.

No longer would Lazarus Straus tramp across the land. He had accumulated enough to start his store on a moderate basis at least. For three or four days he skirmished about the town looking for a location, until he found a tailor who was willing to rent one-half of his store to him. Even upon a yearly basis the rental of his part of the shop would cost less than the annual license which the state of Georgia required itinerants to buy. The opportunity was opened. A resident of Talboton he became. There in its friendliness and culture he brought his family and set up his little home.

The business prospered so rapidly that within a few weeks he was obliged to seek larger quarters. A whole store he found this time, so roomy that he needs must

go back again to Philadelphia to find sufficient stock to fill its shelves. His original stock he had purchased at Oglethorpe, which, although much larger than Talboton, had apparently not appealed to him the half as much.

"Aren't you going to buy your new stock at Oglethorpe?" his fellow merchants of the little county-seat asked him. He shook his head. And they shook theirs.

"The merchants of Oglethorpe will not like it if you pass them by and go on to Philadelphia."

But the founder of the house of Straus in America kept his own counsel and followed his own good judgment. He went to Philadelphia, found his friends again, who had known his family in the Rhine, either personally or by reputation, obtained their credit assistance and with it bought and carried south such wares as Talbot County had not before known, with the result that the business, now fairly launched, was carried to new reaches of success.

If there had been no Civil War it is entirely probable that this record would never have been written—that there would be in 1922 no Macy store in New York to come into printed history. It was in fact that great conflict that brought disaster to so many hundreds and thousands of businesses—big and little—that ended the career of L. Straus of Talboton, Georgia, U. S. A. But not at first. At first, you will recall, the South marched quite gaily into the conflict. She was rich, prosperous, well-populated. Impending conflict looked like little

else than a great adventure. Lazarus Straus' oldest son, Isidor, who had been destined for military training—having already been entered at the Southern Military College, at Collingsworth, to prepare for West Point—could not restrain himself as he helped organize a company of half-grown boys in the village, of which he was immediately elected first-lieutenant. This company asked the Governor of Georgia for arms, but was refused.

"There are not enough guns for the men, let alone the boys," came the words from the ancient capitol at Macon.

At that time Lazarus Straus' partner, the man who was his right hand and aid, did succeed in getting a gun and getting into the war. This made a natural opening for Isidor in the store, in which he progressed rapidly, for a full eighteen months. Then, the partner having been invalided home from the front, the boy was free to engage once again in the service of the newly created nation to which the family, as well as all their friends roundabout them, had already given their fealty. He went to enter himself in the Georgia Military Academy, at Marietta—a few miles north of the growing young railroad town of Atlanta.

Then came one of those slight incidents, seemingly trifling at the moment of the occurrence but sometimes changing the entire trend of men and their affairs. A young man, already a student at the Academy, volunteered to introduce Isidor Straus to his future fellow students. When they were come to one of the dormitories and at the door of a living-room, the kindly

young man swung the door open and bade Isidor enter. He entered, a pail of water, nicely balanced atop the door, tumbled and its contents were poured over the novitiate's head and shoulders.

That single hazing trick disgusted Isidor Straus immeasurably. He was a serious-minded young man, who realized that Georgia at that moment was passing through a particularly serious crisis in her affairs. For such tomfoolery and at such a time he had no use whatsoever. It settled his mind. He did not enter the school, but returned to his hotel, and on the following day, going to a nearby mill, bought a stock of grain and began merchandising it, on his own behalf.

This was not to last long, however. The struggling Confederacy needed his services and needed them badly. The fame of the Straus family—its great ingenuity and ability—had long since passed outside of the boundaries of Talbot County. Tongues wagged and said that Isidor had inherited all of his father's vision and acumen. That settled it. Lloyd G. Bowers, a prominent Georgian, was being designated to head a mission to Europe, to sell, if he could, both Confederate bonds and cotton acceptances. He chose for his secretary and assistant Isidor Straus. And early in 1863 the two men embarked upon a small ship, The May, in Charleston harbor, which, in the course of a single evening, successfully performed the difficult task of running the blockade that guarded that port. Two days later they were at Nassau in the Bahamas, from which the voyage to England was a secondary and fairly easy matter.

Despite the seeming hopelessness of his task—for already the tide had turned and was flowing against the Confederacy—Isidor Straus had a remarkable degree of success in England. In his later years he was fond of relating how, in 1890, while sojourning abroad, in turning over a telephone book in London he came to a name which brought back memories and, acting upon impulse, called that name to the telephone.

"Can you tell me the price of Confederate bonds this morning?" he asked quietly.

"Isidor Straus!" came the astonished reply. A few hours later a real reunion was in progress.

Long before Appomattox came the utter failure of the once brisk little store at Talboton. In fact, the family had left that small village—very nearly in Sherman's path—and had moved to Columbus. There it sat in debt and desperation, as the Confederacy sank to its inevitable death. The only ray of hope in its existence was the vague possibility of success in Isidor's trip to England. And when the son came back to New York, soon after Lee's surrender, Lazarus Straus went north to meet him. Isidor had prospered. Cotton acceptances were not the bonds of a defunct young nation. England needed cotton—the mills of Manchester had stood idle for weeks and months at a time. Isidor Straus knew when and how to sell his cotton-bills—he was, in every sense of the word, a born merchant. He sold shrewdly, lived frugally, and returned to the United States with $12,000 in gold upon his person!

This was the nugget upon which a new family beginning was made. There was to be no more South for the family of Straus. Business opportunity down there was dead—for a quarter of a century at the very least. But business opportunity in New York had never seemed as great as in the flush days of success and prosperity which followed the ending of the war. Lazarus Straus had brought north in his carpet-bag more cotton acceptances. But he had not been as fortunate as his son in having the time and the place to sell them at best advantage. Cotton within a few months had fallen in the United States to but one-half of its price of the preceding autumn.

It was fortunate, indeed, that Isidor Straus had his little bag of golden coin at that moment. It was that gold that enabled him to start with his father, under the name of L. Straus & Son, a rather humble crockery business in a top-floor loft at 161 Chambers Street. The specie went toward the establishment of the new business. The debts of the old were already being paid. Lazarus Straus was, I believe, one of the few Southern merchants who paid their debts in the North in full, and thereby secured a great personal credit. This last came without great difficulty—in after years it was to be said that Isidor Straus could raise more money upon his word alone than any other man in New York. It was Mr. Bliss—of Bliss & Co., long time wholesalers of the city and predecessors of the well-known Tofft, Weller & Co.—who, upon being applied to by Isidor Straus for financial assistance, asked what he and his father proposed to do to regain their fortune.

"Start in the china business," was the simple reply.

"You have your courage," was Mr. Bliss's reply, "your father at the age of fifty-seven—and yourself—to embark upon a brand new business, in which neither of you have had the slightest experience."

But such was the old New Yorker's faith in these men that he sold them the huge bill of merchandise, some $45,000, under which they embarked their business, saying that they could pay him, one-third in cash, and that he could well afford to wait two or even three years for the balance.

He did not have to wait that long. Again the business—in the hands of hard-working born merchandisers—prospered, from the very instant of its beginning. It opened for selling and made its first sale, June 1, 1866. And again within a few short weeks, L. Straus & Son was demanding more room for expansion, and getting it—this time in the form of a ground floor and basement of that same building in Chambers Street. It was still both new and young, however. Its hired employees were but three: a packer, his helper and a selector, or stock-room man. Isidor Straus ran all the details of the store, opening it and closing it each day and acting as its book-keeper, until a year later when Nathan Straus came into the organization, becoming its first salesman. The business was getting ahead. Despite the difficulties and the humbleness of its start it had sold more than $60,000 worth of goods, in the first twelve months of its existence.

"That they were hard months, I could not deny,"

said Isidor Straus of them in after years. "We had bought our house in West Forty-ninth Street, so that we might have our family life together, just as we had had in those pleasant Georgia days of before the war. More than once we contemplated selling the house so that we might put the proceeds in the business, but always at the last moment we were able to avoid that great catastrophe."

And soon the necessity of ever selling the house was past. Prosperity multiplied. The firm went beyond selling the ordinary grades of crockery, which America had only known up to that time—serviceable stuff, but thick and clumsy and heavy—and began the importation upon a huge and increasing scale, of the more delicate and beautiful porcelains of Europe. It added manufacturing to its importations. It became an authority upon fine China. And Nathan Straus, its salesman, had to scurry to keep apace with its growth—already be was becoming known as a super-salesman. He extended his territory to the West and in 1869—the year of the completion of the Union Pacific and Central Pacific Railroads—was going to the West Coast in search for customers. Two years later—a few weeks after the great fire—he opened a selling-office for the firm in Chicago.

"Yet I do not like this travel," he said a little later to his brother. "Not only is it very hard, physically, but I find that as soon as I get away from it the orders fall off. We have to work too hard for the volume of profit in hand."

With this idea firmly in his mind he began a more

intensive cultivation of the fields closer at hand. Some of the establishments of New York that later were to develop already were in their beginnings. There was that smart New Englander up at Fourteenth Street and Sixth Avenue—that man Macy, whose store already was beginning to be the talk of the town. Nathan Straus thought that he would go up and see Rowland H. Macy. And one of the oldest employees of the store still recalls seeing him come into the place, for the first time in his life, on a Saint Patrick's Day—it probably was March 17, 1874—with a paper package under his arm which contained a couple of fine porcelain plates.

Macy was a good prospect. For one thing, remember that he bought as well as sold for cash, and for cash alone. Credit played little or no part in his fortunes. New York had refused him credit when first he came to her and he had learned to do without it. Macy was not alone a good prospect from that point of view but he was, as we have already seen—a man constantly seeking novelty. Straus and his porcelain plates interested him immensely. And the upshot of that first call was the assignment of a space in the basement of the store, about twenty-five by one hundred feet in all, which L. Straus & Sons rented and owned. That was not a common custom at that time, although a little later it became a very popular one, and, I think, prevails to a slight extent even in these days. The Straus experiment in the basement of the Macy store paved the way. It having succeeded remarkably well within a short time after its inception, other and similar

departments were established elsewhere; at R. H. White's, in Boston, at John Wanamaker's, in Philadelphia, at Wechsler & Abraham's, in Brooklyn, and in a Chicago store which long since passed from existence.

Here, after all, was perhaps the real incarnation of the department-store in America, as we know it today, and as it is distinguished from the dry-goods store of other days which, as natural auxiliaries and corrolaries to its business, had long since added to the mere selling of dress-goods that of hosiery, boots and shoes, underclothing, ribbons, hats and other *finesse*, both of women's and of men's apparel. We have seen long since the versatile Miss Getchell adding groceries to Macy's departments—and then for a time withdrawing them—afterwards toys, which were never withdrawn. Even then the department-store idea was gradually being born; with the establishment of the Straus crockery store in the basement of the downtown Macy's it came into the fine flower of its youth.

For fourteen years this arrangement prospered and progressed—grew greatly in public favor. The store, as we have seen, had passed out of the hands of its original proprietors. Death had claimed four of them—within a short period of barely thirty months. And a new generation had come in. But within a decade of the time that he had entered the organization, one of the partners of this second generation, Mr. Wheeler, was considering leaving it. Colorado had fascinated him. To Colorado he must go. To Colorado he did go. He sold his interest to his partner, Mr. Webster, who

in turn sold it to Isidor and Nathan Straus. The crockery counter had absorbed the great store which it had entered so humbly but fourteen years before, as a mere tenant of one of its tiny corners.

Now were there indeed real guiding hands upon the enterprise. Force and energy and ability had come to direct the fortunes of what was already probably the largest merchandising establishment within the entire land. A family which had not known failure, save as a spur to repeated efforts, had come into control. It had everything to gain by the venture and it did not propose to lose.

The actual consolidation and transfer of interests took place on January 1, 1888. Mr. Webster, as has already been recorded, retained his actual interest in the store until 1896, when he retired, disposing of it to his partners but maintaining an office in their building until his death, in 1916. He gave way deferentially, however, to the Straus energy and Straus experience. The effects of these were visible from the beginning.

The personality of the Straus family had, of course, become well identified with the store long before the accomplishment of its reorganization. The crockery department had grown to one of its really huge features. In it Nathan Straus was perhaps more often seen than Isidor, who always was of a quieter and more retiring nature. Many of the employees remember how Nathan Straus came to the store on the morning of the first day of the blizzard of March, 1888. By some strange fatality that morning had been appointed weeks in

advance as the store's annual Spring Millinery Opening—a vernal festival of more than passing interest to a considerable proportion of New York's population. The actual morning found the city far more interested in getting its milk and bread than its straw-hats for oncoming summer. A large number of the employees of the millinery department who had remained in the store late the preceding evening in order to complete the preparations of the great event were compelled to remain there the entire night, being both fed and housed by the firm. They were there when Nathan Straus arrived. Even the elevated railroad which he and many others had looked upon as a reliance after the complete and early collapse of the surface lines, had finally broken under the unparalleled fierceness of the storm. And Nathan Straus, after arriving on a train within a comparatively few blocks of the store, was long delayed there, between the stations, and finally came to the street on a ladder and made his way to the store through the very teeth of the gale.

That was dramatic. It was not so dramatic when, time and time again, both he and his brother, Isidor, would insist upon bundling themselves in all sorts of disagreeable weather and going downtown or up, because an old employee of L. Straus & Son was to be buried or a new one of the retail store was ill. The fidelity and the inherent affection of these men was marked more than once by those who work with and for them. And what it gave to the store in *esprit-de-corps*—in the thing which we have very recently come to know as morale—cannot easily be estimated.

In this, its fourth decade, many distinguished New Yorkers still came to the store. One remembers a President of the United States who came often and who brought his Secretary of the Treasury with him more than once. The President was Grover Cleveland and his Secretary of the Treasury was John G. Carlisle and they were both intimate friends of the brothers Straus. And there came often among customers and friends the late Russell Sage. Macy's sold an unlaundered shirt, linen bosom and cuffs with white cotton back and at a fixed price of sixty-eight cents, which seemed to have a vast appeal to Mr. Sage. Yet he never purchased many at a time—never more than two or three. He was a financier and did not believe in tying up unnecessary capital.

To the store from time to time came Mrs. Paran Stevens. And one day while waiting for Mr. Hibbon of the housefurnishing department, she told Miss Julia Neville, one of the women on the floor there, that while upon an extended trip abroad she had written instructions to her agents in this country to sell certain of her personal belongings and that upon her return she was astounded to find that a glass toilet set, which she had purchased at Macy's for but ninety-nine cents and from which the price-mark had long since been removed had been sold by them at auction for one hundred dollars!

V. The Store Treks Uptown

WITH the beginning of a new century New York was once again in turmoil. Always a restless city, the year 1900 found her suffering severe growing pains. Manhattan Island seemingly was not large enough for the city that demanded elbow room upon it. Moreover, a distinct factor in the growth of New York was not only planned but under construction. Its final completion—in 1904—was already being anticipated. I am referring to the subway. After a quarter of a century of talk and even one or two rather futile actual experiments, a real rapid-transit railroad up and down the backbone of Manhattan finally was under way. As originally planned it extended from the City Hall up Lafayette Street and Fourth Avenue to the Grand Central Station, at which point it turned an abrupt right angle and proceeded through Forty-second Street to Times Square, where it again turned abruptly—north this time—into Broadway, which it followed almost to the city line; first to the Harlem River at Kingsbridge and eventually to its present terminus at Van Cortlandt Park. A branch line, thrusting itself toward the east from Ninety-sixth Street, emerged upon an elevated structure which it followed to the Bronx Park and Zoological Gardens.

Before this original section of the subway was completed it already was in process of extension toward the south; from the City Hall to and under the South Ferry to Brooklyn which it reached in two successive leaps; the first to the Borough Hall (the old Brooklyn City Hall) and the second to the Atlantic Avenue station of the Long Island Railroad, which has remained its terminus until within the past twelvemonth. More recently the original subway system of Greater New York has been so changed and enlarged as to all but lose sight of the original plan. Instead of a single main-stem up the backbone of New York, there are now two parallel trunks—the one on the east side of the town and the other upon the west—and the now isolated link of the original main line in Forty-second Street has become a shuttle service from the Grand Central Station to Times Square and the cross-bar of the letter "H" which forms the rough plan of the entire system. Still other underground railroads have come to supplement the vast task of this original system. It is more than a decade since the energy of William G. McAdoo completed the Hudson River Tubes, which an earlier generation had had the vision but not the ability to build, and brought their upper stem through and under Sixth Avenue and to a terminal at Herald Square; while even more recently the huge and far-reaching Brooklyn Rapid Transit system has appropriated Broadway, Manhattan, for a vastly elongated terminal; which takes the concrete form of a four-tracked underground railroad beneath that world-famed street all the way from the City Hall to

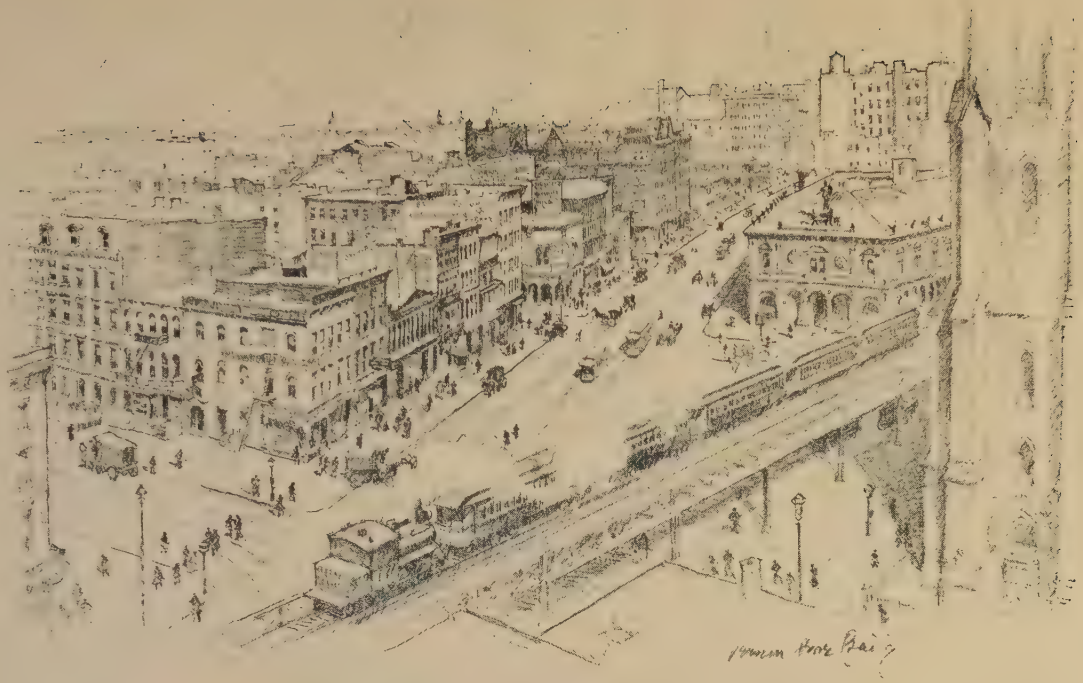
Times Square and above that point through Seventh Avenue to Fifty-ninth Street and Central Park; and thence across the Queensborough Bridge.

It was the original subway, however, that brought the great real-estate upheaval to New York. Many years before it was completed New York had been moving steadily uptown—shrewd observers used to say at the rate of ten of the short city blocks each ten years. But its progress had been slow and dignified—relatively at least. With the coming of the new subway, dignity in this movement was thrown to the four winds. A mad rush uptown. Wholesale firms abandoned the structures that had housed them for years in the business districts south of Fourteenth Street and began to look for newer and larger quarters north of that important cross-town thoroughfare. The retail world of New York was far slower to be influenced by the change. For one thing, its investment in permanent structures was relatively much higher than that of the wholesale. Folk who came from afar and who marveled at the elegance of Sixth Avenue as a shopping street, all the way from Thirteenth to Twenty-third, could hardly have conceived that within two decades it would become dusty, forlorn, practically deserted. No matter that the hotel life of New York had ascended well to the north of Twenty-third, that the theaters were beginning to gather even north of Thirty-fourth, that a few small, smart, exclusive shops were showing signs of joining the trek—there remained the realty investment in the department stores at Sixth Avenue. It seemed incredible that such a huge invest-

ment should be thrown to the winds. Yet this was the very thing that actually was accomplished.

Macy's stood to lose less in an economic sense from a move uptown than any of its competitors. True it was that the firm had builded for its own account in Fourteenth Street, just east of the original store, a very handsome, steel-constructed, stone-fronted building which it had thrown into the older building in order to relieve the pressure upon it. Across the way, on the north side of Fourteenth Street, it had put up at an even earlier date a substantial seven-story store for the use of its greatly expanded furniture department. The original store, however, stood upon leased land—the property of the Rhinelander Estate. One of the earliest of the stories about Mr. Macy concerns the coming of George Rogers, the agent of the estate and his warm personal friend as well, each Monday morning; not for his rent; but to cash a check for thirty dollars. It was not hard to guess at his compensation.

The increase in land rentals in the neighborhood and the fact that the firm could hardly hope ever to acquire an actual title to the valuable site of its main store, coupled with the steadily increasing trek uptown, caused the Macy management to consider seriously whether it would join in the northward movement. It soon would have to do one thing or the other. The old store was growing very old and very overcrowded. Moreover, it was, at the best, a makeshift, a jumbling together of one separate store after another in order to accommodate a business which forever refused to stay put. Under such conditions a scientific or efficient



THE HERALD SQUARE OF ANTE-MACY DAYS

In 1900, before the coming of the present store, Broadway at 34th Street gave but faint promise of its present importance

planning of the building had been quite out of the question. The real wonder was that the business had been conducted so well, against such a handicap.

The move once considered was quickly determined upon. No other course seemingly would have been possible. To have erected a new store building upon a leasehold in a quarter of the town which presently might begin to slide backward—would have been a precarious experiment, to put it mildly. It must go uptown. The only question that really confronted the store was just where to go uptown. A site large enough for a huge department-store is not usually acquired overnight. Moreover, the necessity for secrecy in so important a step was obvious—the dangers of the mere suggestion of its becoming known were multifold.

With these things clearly understood, the search for a new site was begun. Various ones were considered, but were finally rejected. For a time the firm considered buying the famous old Gilsey House and the property immediately adjoining it. Another site which appealed to it even more was the former site of the Broadway Tabernacle on the east side of Broadway, just north of Thirty-fourth Street—the site of the present Marbridge Building. The commanding prescience of this corner forced itself upon them. Sixth Avenue, an artery street north and south, threaded by electric surface-cars and the elevated railroad—the McAdoo Tubes had not then come into even a paper being—was crossed at acute angles by an even more

important street—New York's incomparable Broadway—and at right angles by Thirty-fourth Street, which even then was giving promise of its coming importance. The original planners of the uptown city of New York made many serious mistakes in their far-seeing scheme. But they made no mistake when they took each half mile or so and made one of their cross streets into a thoroughfare as bold and as wide as one of their north and south avenues. Thirty-fourth was one of the streets picked out for such importance. And from the beginning it realized the judgment of its planners. The completion of the huge Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in 1897 (the earlier or Waldorf side in Thirty-third Street had been finished in 1893) had fixed the importance of the street. Thirteen years later the opening of the Pennsylvania Station was to confirm it—for all time.

In 1900 the vast plan of the Pennsylvania Railroad for the invasion of Manhattan was as yet unknown. Even in the main offices of that railroad, in Broad Street Station, Philadelphia, it still was most inchoate and fragmentary. In the language of the moment, Macy's was "acting on its own." The store was using its own powers of foreseeing—and using them very well indeed.

But the site on the east side of Herald Square was not to be. In free titles it was not nearly large enough. But the west side of the square! There was a possibility. If the new store could be builded there it not only could possess an actual Broadway frontage but it would be set so far back from the elevated railroad as

not to be bothered by its noise or smoke, even in the slightest degree. As a matter of fact the last already was disappearing. The electric third-rail system was being installed everywhere upon the Manhattan system, and the pertinacious, puffy little locomotives, which so long had been a feature of New York town, were doomed to an early disappearance.

The west side of Herald Square appealed to Macy's. Long and exacting searches into its land-titles were made. Some three hundred feet back of Broadway the magnificent new theater of Koster & Bial's, extending all the way from Thirty-fourth Street to Thirty-fifth, backed up a tract which in the main was occupied by comparatively low buildings, the most of them brown-stone residences, which already were in the course of transformation into small business places. This tract seemingly was quite large enough for the new Macy's—with the possible exception, perhaps, of its engine-room and mechanical departments. The firm decided to take it, and with a policy of magnificent secrecy began negotiations for its lease. In order to accommodate the engine and machinery rooms it purchased a tract upon the north side of Thirty-fifth Street just back of the former Herald Square Theater. On this last land stood two of New York's most notorious resorts of twenty years ago—the Pekin and the Tivoli. The development of the Macy plan drove them out of the street and, for the time being at least, out of business.

The Macy plan did not go through to a final

culmination, however, quite as it had been laid out. So huge a scheme and one involving so many separate real-estate transactions is hard to keep a secret for any great length of time. Gradually the news of Macy's contemplated step became public property. It caused public astonishment and public acclaim. For, remember, if you will, that in 1900, none of the department stores had moved uptown north of Twenty-third Street. Bloomingdale's was at Third Avenue and Fifty-ninth and Sixtieth Streets, but it was a gradual upgrowth, from a modest beginning upon that original important corner. The last move had been in 1862, when A. T. Stewart had moved his store from Chambers Street north to Ninth. The cost of the lot and structure to Mr. Stewart was $2,750,000—a stupendous figure in that day.

The publicity surrounding the proposed move of Macy's found the Straus family still without one of the plots necessary to the complete acquisition of all the land in the block east of Koster & Bial's. It was the small but important northwest corner of Broadway and Thirty-fourth Street—a mere thirty by fifty feet, a remnant of an ancient farm whose zig-zag boundaries antedated the coming of the city plan and showed a seeming fine contempt for it. This tiny parcel was the property of an old-time New Yorker, the Rev. Duane Pell. Dr. Pell was on an extended trip in Europe in 1901, when Macy's began the active acquisition of its new store-site. It was given to understand that his asking price for the small corner was $250,000; an

astonishing figure for such a tiny bit of land, even today, but Dr. Pell felt that he held the key to the entire important Herald Square corner and that he was justified in asking any price for it that he saw fit to ask.

While the plot was so small as to afford very little to it in the way of actual floor space the Macy management felt that it was so essential to the appearance of the store that it agreed to come to Dr. Pell's price—and so cabled him; in Spain. Word came back that he was about to embark for New York and that he would take up the entire matter immediately upon his arrival.

A few years before the Macy organization planned to be the initial department-store to move uptown, Henry Siegel, a Chicago merchant, who had achieved a somewhat spectacular and ephemeral success in that city, decided upon the invasion of New York. He came to Manhattan and in Sixth Avenue, midway between Fourteenth and Twenty-third Streets, erected a store which for a time duplicated the success of its Chicago predecessor. The proposed move of the Macy store apparently filled him with consternation. With a good deal of prophetic vision he foresaw that other Sixth Avenue stores would go uptown in its wake. His own investment in that street was too great and too recent to be jeopardized.

Siegel hit upon the idea of stepping into the old site and building at Fourteenth Street and Sixth Avenue as soon as the Macy organization should vacate. But to desire that valuable location and to secure it were two vastly different things. The Strauses were not asleep

to the possibility of some one attempting such a move. It would not be the first time in merchandising history. They arranged carefully therefore that their old corner at Fourteenth Street and Sixth Avenue should remain entirely empty for two years after they had moved out from it. The moral and educational effect of such a hiatus was not to be underestimated.

In the meantime the Chicago man was busy on his own behalf. Through his realty agents he had quickly discovered Dr. Duane Pell's ownership of the corner point of the new Macy plot. He also found that the dominie was already on his return to the United States. He entrusted to a faithful representative the task of meeting him at the steamer-pier. The agent was there, bright and early, to meet the boat, and within a half-hour of its docking Siegel had acquired the north-west corner of Broadway and Thirty-fourth Street.

Now was the Chicagoan in a strategic position to do business with the Macy concern. At least so he felt. The concern felt differently. As far as it was concerned the corner point had sentimental value; nothing else. We already have seen how slight was its floor-space. Without hesitation it turned its back upon the tiny corner, and with the money that it had intended investing in it, purchased the leasehold of the huge theater of Koster & Bial—about twenty thousand square feet of ground space—which enabled it to place its mechanical departments (engine-rooms and the like) in its main building, and so to leave the former Tivoli and Pekin sites for the moment unimproved. This done, it turned its attention to the gentleman from

Chicago. It leased him the premises at Fourteenth Street at a much higher figure than it would have been glad to rent them to another concern, and under the provisions that they should not be occupied until at least two years after the removal of the parent concern from them and that the name "Macy" should never again appear on the buildings of that site.

With the site difficulties cleared up, the actual construction problems of the enterprise were entered upon. Nineteen hundred and one was born before Macy's was enabled to begin the wholesale destruction of the many buildings upon its new site. The job of clearing the site and erecting the new building was entrusted to the George A. Fuller Company, which had just completed the sensational Flatiron Building at the apex of Fifth Avenue and Broadway at Twenty-third Street, and it was one of the first, if not the very first of the building contracts in New York where the estimates were based upon the cubic feet contents. DeLomas and Cordes, who had had a considerable success in the planning of one or two of the more recent department stores in the lower Sixth Avenue district, were chosen as the achitects of the new building. Before they entered upon the actual drawing of the plans they made an extended study of such structures, both in the United States and abroad. The new building represented the last word in department store design and construction. Nine stories in height and with 1,012,500 square feet of floor-space, it was designed not only to handle great throngs of shoppers each day but the multifold working details of service to them, with the greatest expedition,

and economy. To do this it was estimated that there would be required fourteen passenger elevators, ten freight elevators and seven sidewalk elevators of the most recent type. Four escalators were installed running from the main floor to the fifth. It is to be noted, too, that these escalators were the very first to be installed in which the step upon which the passenger rides is held continuously horizontal. In the older types the ascending floor is held at an awkward angle of ascension and foothold is maintained only by the attaching of steel cleats at right angles to it.

Lighting, ventilation, plumbing, all these received in turn the most careful consideration and planning. For instance, it was determined quite early in the progress of the planning for the new Macy store that it should be ventilated entirely by great fans, which, sucking the air in ducts down from the roof, would heat it or cool it, as the necessities of the season might demand, before distributing it through another duct to the working floors of the building. In this way the close and stuffy atmosphere somewhat common to old-time department stores when filled with patrons was entirely obviated in this new one.

When we come to the consideration of the everyday workings of the Macy store today we shall see how well these architects of twenty years ago planned its details. We shall not see, however, one of the most interesting of them. When it was originally builded, by far the greater part of its ninth floor was devoted to a huge exhibition hall. Within a short time this room was in a fair way to become as famous as the

larger auditorium of Madison Square Garden. In it were held poultry-shows, flower shows, even one of the very first automobile shows. Within a few years after its opening, however, the business of the store had grown to such proportions that it was found necessary to give its great space to the more mundane business of direct selling.

The problem of the corner tip there at Thirty-fourth and Broadway was quickly overcome. If the new owner of that point had counted upon the new store which completely encircled him turning tens of thousands of folk past it each day he was doomed to disappointment. For Macy's made its own corner by means of a broad arcade entirely within the cover of its own huge roof; an inside street, lined with show-windows upon either side and giving, in wet weather as well as fine, a dry and handsome passageway direct from Broadway into Thirty-fourth Street.

The original suggestion for such an arcade came in an anonymous letter to the original architects of the building. Only within the past year or two has this passageway been abandoned. The demands of the business for more elbow-room are voracious and apparently unceasing. And the space that the arcade consumed became entirely too great to be used any longer for such a purpose.

In that summer of 1901, while the architects and contractors were busy at their plans and specifications, there was wholesale and systematic devastation upon such a scale as New York has rarely ever seen. Such

pullings down and tearings away! The scene was not without its drama at any time. The writer well remembers strolling into the Koster & Bial Music Hall on an evening during that season of destruction. There was no one to bar his passage into what, at the time of its opening, but eight short years before, had been New York's most elaborate playhouse. If his glance had not been turned downward there was nothing to indicate that the evening performance might not easily begin within the hour. Upwards the great auditorium of red and gold was immaculate. The proscenium, the tier upon tier of balcony and of gallery, the dozens of upholstered boxes, the exquisitely decorated ceiling had not been touched.

But if the eye glanced downward—what a difference! The main floor and its row upon row of heavy plush chairs was entirely gone. In their place was a mucky black sea of mud; a knee-high morass, if you please, in which a dozen contractor's wagons, hauled and tugged unevenly by squads of lunging mules and horses in their traces, circled in and circled out—inbound empty and outbound laden deep with their muddy burden. On the stage, back of what had once been the footlights and in the same place where the darling Carmencita had once been wont to make her bow, stood a shirt-sleeved gang-boss. On either side of him, spotlights—things theatrical yanked from the memories of yesteryear—threw their radiance down into the auditorium and the motley audience it held.

So went Koster & Bial's, the pet plaything of joyous New York in its Golden Age. In a short time the

scaffolding was to rise in that mighty amphitheater and the decorations to come tumbling down. Gang upon gang to the roof; more gangs still to the stout side-walls, brick by brick; down they came until Koster & Bial's was no more. Its site was marked by a huge and gaping hole in the subsoil of Manhattan.

There were other phases of that tearing-down that were less dramatic and more comic. A restaurant-keeper who had a small eating place on the Broadway side of the site sought obdurately to hold out in his location—seeking an advantageous cash settlement from the store owners. His lease, perfectly good, still had from sixty to ninety days to run. He felt that the store could not wait that length of time upon him—that, in the language of the street, it would be forced to "come across." But it did not "come across." It was not built that way. It was built on either side of the restaurant. Its steel girders were far above its tiny walls and spanning one another across its ceiling before its disappointed proprietor moved out—at the end of his perfectly good lease—and without one cent of bonus money in his pocket; after which it was almost a matter of mere hours to tear the flimsy structure away and remove a small segment of earth that held it up to street level. A barber around the corner in Thirty-fourth street caught his cue from the restaurant. He, too, was going to stand pat. But he was not in the same strategic position as the *restaurateur*. He had no lease. He merely was going to stay and defy the wreckers. They would not dare to touch his neat, immaculate shop.

They did dare. On the very night that his lease expired something happened to the business enterprise of the razor-wielder. A cyclone must have struck it. At least that was the way it looked. The barber, coming down to business on the morrow, found his movables upon the sidewalk, neatly piled together and covered by tarpaulins against the weather. But the shop was gone. Where it had stood on the close of the preceding day was a deep hole in the ground; and three Italian workmen were whistling the Anvil Chorus.

About the tenth of October, 1901, actual construction began on the new building. On the first day of November of the following year it was complete—or practically so. It was a record for building, even in New York, which is fairly used to records of that sort. A steel-framed nine-story building, approximately four hundred feet on Thirty-fourth and Thirty-fifth Streets, by one hundred and eighty feet on Broadway (widening to two hundred feet at the west end of the store), with 1,012,500 square feet of floor-space, and 13,500,000 cubic feet in all, had been erected in a trifle over six months. In the meanwhile the wisdom of the Macy choice of location was already being made evident. A Washington concern—Saks and Company—was on its way toward Herald Square. It took the west side of Broadway for the block just south of Thirty-fourth Street, and by dint of great effort and because its building was considerably smaller in area, succeeded in getting into it ahead of Macy's.

Herald Square! There was, and still is, a site well

worth rushing toward. We have seen already the strategic advantages of the new site, even as far back as 1902, long before the coming of the great Pennsylvania Station just back of it at Seventh Avenue. Ever since 1890, when the remarkable vision of the late James Gordon Bennett had seen the crossing of Broadway and Sixth Avenue as the finest possible location for his beloved *Herald* and had torn down the little old armory in the gorge between these two thoroughfares, Thirty-fifth and Thirty-sixth Streets, to build a Venetian palace for it there, the square had been a veritable hub for the vast activities of New York. Hotels, shops and theaters sprang up roundabout it. And the coming of what is one of the finest, if not the very largest, of the great railroad terminals of the land but multiplied its real importance.

The actual moving from the old store to the new was a herculean task. Yet it was accomplished within three days—which means that large enterprise was reduced through the perfection of system to a rather ordinary one. This could not have been if all its details and its possibilities had not been anticipated long in advance and planned against.

The job was undertaken by the store itself; through its delivery department, in charge of Mr. James Price, with Mr. James Woods as his very active assistant. Both of these men are veteran employees of Macy's. The service record of the one of them reaches to forty-one years and the other to forty-eight. They knew full well the size of the moving-day task that confronted

them. To pick up a huge New York department-store and carry it twenty uptown blocks—almost an even mile—was a deal of a contract. Yet neither of them flinched at it. But both put on their thinking-caps and evolved a definite plan for it—a plan which in all its details worked without a hitch.

The old store closed its doors for the final time at six o'clock in the evening of Monday, November 3, 1902. The following day was Election Day. The movers voted early. They came to the Fourteenth Street store not long after daybreak and there began the great trek uptown—stock and fixtures. For three days they kept a steady procession; west through Fourteenth Street, then north through Seventh Avenue—to Thirty-fourth—from the old store to the new—and the empty wagons returning down through Sixth Avenue to Fourteenth Street once again. The entire route was carefully patrolled by special guards and policemen, and the entire task finally accomplished late on Thursday evening, the 6th, at which Mr. Isidor Straus was called on the telephone and told quietly:

"We shall be able to open tomorrow if you wish it."

But the head of the house advised that the opening be set for Saturday, as had been advertised; it would give a final valuable day for setting things to rights, which meant that at eight o'clock on the morning of Saturday, November 8, the new store opened its doors to the public that was anxiously awaiting the much heralded event; with as much simplicity and seeming ease as if it had been situated at Thirty-fourth Street for the entire forty-four years of its life, instead of

but a mere twenty-four hours. A great task had been accomplished, a long step forward safely taken—and Macy's was ready to enter upon a new decade of its existence.

In its wake there came uptown the other department-stores of New York; one by one until, with but three exceptions, every one of these establishments which had been situated south of Twenty-third Street and which are still in business today, had joined in the trek. Lord & Taylor's left its comfortable home at Broadway and Twentieth Street, in which it had been housed for nearly half a century since coming north from its original location in Grand Street, and moved to Fifth Avenue and Thirty-ninth; its ancient neighbor in Broadway, Arnold Constable & Company, stood again almost cheek by jowl in Fifth Avenue. McCreery's, first establishing an uptown branch in Thirty-fourth Street, eventually abandoned its older store in Twenty-third Street and consolidated its energies in the upper one. Mr. Altman moved his business to its new marble palace at Fifth Avenue and Thirty-fourth, and Stern's went as far north as Forty-second. Lower Sixth Avenue began to look like a deserted village. Simpson-Crawford's, Greenhut's, Adam's, O'Neill's—one by one these closed their doors for the final time. Once, and that was but two decades ago, they had been household words among the women of New York. Now their buildings were emptied, stood empty and deserted for months and for years—in most cases until the coming of the Great War and our participation in

it, when the Government was very glad to make use of their spacious floors for war manufacturing and for hospitalization. Of Macy's old-time competitors downtown who failed to join in the uptown movement, but three remained—Wanamaker's, Daniell's and Hearn's, who stood and still stand pat and prosperous in the locations which they have occupied for almost half a century.

The rest are all gone. Twenty-third Street, which of a Saturday afternoon used to be filled from Fifth Avenue to Sixth with smart folk of every sort, is as dull as the deserted lower Sixth Avenue. Memories walk its spacious pavements. The Eden Museé, that paradise for youth of an earlier generation, is vanished. So is the Fifth Avenue Hotel, which for forty years played so large a part in the political history of the town. That part of New York today is all but dead—inside of twenty years. Some day hence it may be reborn. Such things have come to pass in the big town ere now.

In the meantime the newest New York has come into its being. The construction of the two modern railroad terminals—the one in Thirty-third Street and the other in Forty-second—has created in the district that lies between them what today would seem to be the permanent retail shopping center of the city. The one station brings nearly 60,000 folk—transients and commuters—the other almost 100,000, into New York each business day. They anchor and anchor firmly, its new business heart. Its sidewalks are daily thronged. As was Twenty-third Street two decades ago, so has

THE MACY'S OF TODAY

By 1903 the new Macy's in Herald Square was finished and the business going forward in great strides

Thirty-fourth become today. Not only the railroad stations but four great subways running north and south, four elevated railways, too, a dozen surface-car lines, and innumerable taxis and private motor-cars pour their passengers into it. It is a thoroughfare of surpassing importance.

Fifty years ago, as Rowland H. Macy walked home one evening with his daughter—as was his frequent wont—from the simple little old red-brick store in Fourteenth Street to their new house in Forty-ninth, he paused for a moment with her in front of the old Broadway Tabernacle.

"I want you to notice this corner, very carefully, Florence," said he. "A half-century hence and the business of New York is to be centered between Thirty-fourth Street and Forty-second. Here is to be the future business heart of this wonderful city."

It is upon the vision of men quite as much as upon their prudence that the success of their enterprises depends.

Today

I. A Day in a Great Store

THE subtle hour which in summer comes just before the break of day is the only hour in which New York ever sleeps; if indeed the modern Bagdad ever sleeps at all. There is an hour, however—from three of the morning until four—when the city is all but stilled; when its heart-beats are at the lowest ebb of the twenty-four. In that hour even Broadway is nearly deserted and Sixth Avenue and Thirty-fourth Street equally emptied. The swinging lights of a white-fronted lunch-room or two; the echoing racket of an extremely occasional surface-car or elevated train; the rush of a "night-hawk" taxi; the clatter of the milk-wagon; the measured walk of a policeman and the hurried one of some much belated suburbanite hurrying toward the great railroad station over in Seventh Avenue; these sounds, occasional and unrelated seemingly, are not New York; not at least the New York that you and I are accustomed to knowing. Yet, after all, they are New York; even, if you please, the New York of that throbbing heart, Herald Square.

Soon after four in the morning the city begins to rise. New York's heart-beat is quickening, distinctly, even though ever and ever so slightly at the beginning. Yet the activity is distinguishable. The policemen and the cabbies in the square realize it, so do the waiter

and the cook in the *Firefly* lunch wagon which has stood in the busy Herald Square these thirty years or more now. The morning papers are out. The newspaper wagons, as well as those that bring milk and other comestibles, begin to multiply. The earliest workers in the heart of Manhattan now bestir themselves. By six there is real animation in the broad streets in and roundabout Macy's. By seven the traffic there begins to be a matter of reckoning. A traffic policeman makes his appearance. The current of vehicles and humans in those thoroughfares come under regulation. At eight, the city is in full sway.

All this while Macy's has stood dark—save for the few yellow and red lights which police and fire protection demand. It fronts toward Broadway and the side streets alike are cold, impassive, unanimated. Inside the great dark building the watchmen are on ceaseless patrol. There are miles of corridors to be paced—the night walking of the Macy watchmen would reach from Dan to Beersheba or possibly from New York to Erie—millions of dollars worth of stock and fixtures to be guarded. A diamond ring would be missed; and so would a spool of thread. Nothing must be disturbed. And in order that the owners of the store may sleep in the sound assurance that nothing is being disturbed, the night patrol is made a matter of system and of record. Watchmen's clocks, here and there and everywhere, proclaim the regularity of the system. And an occasional surprise test now and then acclaims its thoroughness.

Hours before, the store was thoroughly cleaned; from cellar to roof. The last of yesterday's belated shoppers was hardly out of this market-place, before the men of the cleaning squads were in upon their heels. What a mess to be tidied up! Eight and one-half hours of hard endeavor can make daily a mighty dirty store and a huge housekeeping job. There is at the best a vast litter—and yet a litter that cannot be carelessly thrust away. In all that debris there may be some one tiny article of great value—a ring or a purse, dropped by some hasty or careless shopper or salesgirl. It all must be carefully gone through and in the morning sent to the Lost and Found Department where the chances are that it will not remain very long before having a claimant.

Such is the ordinary routine of the cleaning squads. On rainy or snowy days its job is increased, measurably. It is astonishing the amount of filth the sidewalks of New York can give up on a wet day. Yet rain, or no rain, filth or no filth, the cleansing must be thorough. The store at eight o'clock of the next morning must be as clean as the proverbial pin. An earnest of which you can obtain for yourself any day by pressing your nose, among the first of the impatient early shoppers, against the panes of the public entrance doors. Through the night these toilers work; silently, unseen, save by others of their own kind. Far below them, in the cellars of the great structure at Thirty-fourth Street and Broadway, there are other squads who stand to unending tricks at the boilers, the engines, the dynamos and the other mechanical appliances of the

organism. The fires may never die; the lights never go out—not even from one year's end to the other. And so that the very heart and blood and nerve-force of Macy's shall in truth be unending there are engines and boilers and dynamos in the mechanical plant under the Thirty-fourth Street sidewalks. As many as five hundred tons of coal can be housed in the bunkers hard at hand. The entire plant could easily light and supply the other necessary electric current for the needs of any brisk American town of five or six thousand people.

Eight o'clock, and the night superintendent of the store unlocks the first of its outer doors. But not to the public. Mr. Public's hours do not begin until a full sixty minutes later. First the store must be made ready for his coming. It is not enough that it shall be thoroughly cleaned in every fashion. The stock must be displayed anew; the long miles of dust coverings lifted off, folded and put away until the coming of another evening. Which means, of course, that the store folk must come well in advance of its patrons.

In the half-hour which elapses between eight and eight-thirty, many of the minor executives—particularly those of the selling floors—make their appearance at the designated doors upon the side streets. In the parlance of the organization these are known as "specials" and are divided into several classes, denoting chiefly their connection with its selling or non-selling forces. They "sign in" their arrival upon a sheet. For while Macy's is known as the department-store without a time-clock, there is none which is more punctilious

about keeping an exact record of the comings and goings of its workers, from the lowest to the highest. In the entire permanent organization of more than five thousand folk, there are not more than ten or a dozen who are exempted from this necessity. A man may draw a twenty-thousand-dollar-a-year salary at Macy's and still be compelled to sign his time. It is part of the inherent democracy of the organization which holds as a high principle that what is fair for one man is fair for another. A better bed-rock principle can hardly be imagined.

Half after eight!

A bell rings somewhere. The time-lists of the minor executives—perhaps it is better to remember them as the specials—are closed, and new ones substituted. These are duplicates of the earlier ones. When the section manager (a modern and much better name for the "floor-walker" of the earlier days) signs one of these, he does not merely put down an "X" as before eight-thirty, but specifically writes down his arriving time.

But from eight-thirty to eight-forty-five is known to the rank and file of the organization as its hour for arrival. Three doors—one in Thirty-fourth Street (for the women, as well as for men executives) and two others, in Thirty-fifth Street (for the other men workers and the junior girls respectively) open on the precise moment of the half-hour. Even before they swing backward upon their hinges the earliest risers of the Macy family are beginning to group themselves in

front of them. They go tramping up the broad stairs together; dropping into the slender receptacles the individual brass checks (of which much more a little later) at the first barrier-gateway; after which they go scurrying off to the locker-rooms, before descending or ascending to their various posts in the store.

For fifteen minutes this rank and file—a miniature army it is—comes trooping in. There is no time to be lost; and yet no unseemly haste or confusion. And no noise. Noise, particularly surplus noise, is quite unnecessary in a machine which is functioning well.

At eight-forty-five the barrier at the head of the main employees' stair at Thirty-fourth Street closes. And in order that there may not be even the slightest particle of unfairness—one gains an increasing admiration for the absolute impartiality of an organization such as this—the pressing of a button at that stairhead automatically orders closed the two auxiliary entrances in Thirty-fifth. And yet, in order perhaps that perfectly automatic and impartial systems may, after all, be tinged by a bit of human sympathy and understanding, eight-forty-five is forever translated at the employees' doors as eighty-forty-seven. And in cases of bad weather, hard rain or snow or extreme cold, eight-forty-seven becomes the stroke of nine by the clock—in very extreme cases even later, with a special allowance being made from time to time for the occasional breakdown of New York's rather temperamental transportation system.

From eight-forty-five (eight-forty-seven) to nine o'clock, the late-comers—out of breath as a rule and

extremely embarrassed into the bargain—are herded into a special group and given special "late" passes, without which they may not even enter the locker rooms, to say nothing of their posts in the store. Sometimes—when the tardiness percentages of the store have been running to unwonted heights—the group is admonished; always gently, always considerately. It is made to them a point of fairness, between the store and themselves. And almost invariably the admonition is received in the spirit in which it is given. In other days it was quite customary for the store manager or one of his several assistants to receive these late-comers personally and individually and talk to them, heart-to-heart. This method has now been entirely abolished. It led to controversy. It led to argument. And both of these led to ill-feeling. Macy's will not tolerate ill-feeling between its executives and its rank and file. Therefore, anything that might even tend to such an end was abolished—completely and permanently.

In due time, and when we are studying in greater detail the Macy family, we shall come again to the consideration of the methods of checking the force in in the morning and out again at night—as well as in and out at different intervals throughout the day. Consider now that it is still lacking a few brief minutes of nine o'clock on a workday morning. The sales force are through the lockers and getting to their day's work upon the floor. The non-selling forces as well—elevator-men, cashiers, all the rest of them, are at their

posts. A doorman is told off to each of the public street entrances to the main floor. It is the regular post for each of these. He goes to it a minute or two before the coming of nine.

After a brief period of busy activity the store aisles are for the moment practically deserted once again. There is a group of buyers "signing in"—once again the inevitable time-list—at the superintendent's office just beneath the main stair, where five or ten minutes ago the "big chief" of the whole main floor was giving his section managers their special instructions for the day. The rest of the aisles are all but empty. The clerks are behind the desks, the cashiers at their posts, the section managers at attention, the elevators banked and waiting at the ground floor— Then—

Nine o'clock!

The echo of Madison Square Mary telling the hour comes rolling up Broadway. The street doors swing open; almost as if working upon a single mechanism. The first of the shoppers come tumbling in. The great main aisle of the store—one thinks of it almost as the Broadway of this city within a city—is populated once again. The chief stream of the store's patrons pours down through it. Other streams from the doors in the side streets join it; still others diverge down the side aisles, up the stair and escalators, into the elevators which presently go packing off, one by one, toward the mysterious and fascinating regions of the upper floors. In three or four brief minutes the picture that one has of that mighty first floor from the mezzanine balcony that runs roundabout it is of a great mass of hurry-

ing, scurrying humanity; no longer any well-defined currents, but little eddies and pools of human beings constantly and forever changing.

And this but hardly past nine o'clock in the morning. In another hour there will be still more folk within the great building. Most of them have come to shop, a few of them to take a tardy breakfast in the comfortable restaurant upon its eighth floor. One might not think that it would pay to open a restaurant for breakfast at as late an hour as nine in the morning, but such a one would not know his New York. Breakfast in our big town is rarely over until the setting of the sun.

For an hour at the beginning of the day the Macy family may shop in its own interest. The saleswomen—the men as well—may obtain permits from their division managers which in turn entitle them to large and conspicuous shopping cards which serve two pretty definite purposes—the identification of the saleswoman as an actual and authorized shopper (she is not supposed to go nosing around other departments merely in her own interest or curiosity) and the obtaining for her of the discount to which she is entitled. Macy's is known pretty generally as a store of no special privileges or discounts. Teachers, clergymen, professional shoppers, dressmakers are recognized and welcomed in the big store, but only upon the same terms as every other sort of customer. But the rule bends, ever and ever so gently, for the man or woman who is employed within it. After all, he or she *is* a part of the family and so entitled to be recognized. This

recognition takes the form of a sizable reduction upon the wearing apparel necessary for his or her personal use. This difference goes upon the books of the store as a business expense.

By ten the store has finished shopping in its own behalf. Its maximum force for the day is on the job and the wise shopper comes close to this hour. For by eleven the force is reduced. Luncheon is a very simple human necessity; but a necessity, nevertheless. And New York has never countenanced the Parisian habit of locking up practically all shops and stores and offices for an hour and a half or two hours in the middle of the day. But then New York has never taken its meal-times quite so seriously as Paris. Upon this one thing alone a considerable essay might be written.

But New York must lunch, just as Paris or London or any other community must lunch. And so for three valuable hours out of the middle of the day the Macy force is reduced nearly one-third its size. Forty-five minutes is the ordinary allotment for lunch and the house prefers that its folk shall take this mid-day meal underneath its roof. Toward this end it has made, as we shall see, elaborate and expensive preparations in the form of elaborate lunch-rooms and the like. However, it recognizes that there are many workers who prefer to go out at the middle of the day. And proper arrangements are made for the accommodation of these folk.

By two o'clock, however, practically the entire selling force at least is back again. The hardest portion of

the day begins. For, no matter how hard the store may advertise, no matter how it may strive to educate its patrons in every other way to the use of its facilities in the less crowded and hence more comfortable morning hours, the hard and solemn fact remains that it suits the comfort and convenience of the average New York woman to shop in the afternoon. And shop in the afternoon she does. She comes into Macy's right after luncheon—although a single glance at the big and crowded restaurant would easily convince you that she often lunches as well as shops in the big red-brick institution of Herald Square—and then gets right down to the serious business of shopping.

And at Macy's it *is* business; always business. The big store at Broadway and Thirty-fourth Street, in recent years at least, has not gone in for shows—for organ and orchestral concerts or recitals or anything of that sort. It has considered that its best shows are always upon its counters. It has had no quarrel with the successful stores that have added entertainment features to the other routine of their operations. It merely has contended that its own method was completely satisfactory to itself. Which, after all, is a position of infinite strength.

"Macy's attractions are its prices!" is an advertising slogan of the house so long sounded now that it has become almost a household phrase to its hundreds of thousands of regular patrons. It is a phrase up to which it has lived, steadily and consistently. And not only has it steadfastly refused to give shows of any sort—save, of course, those wonderful window

pageants of other years, which were horses of quite a different color indeed—but it has also refused up to the present time to install such non-merchandise enterprises as manicuring parlors, hair-dressing rooms, barber shops and the like. And this despite the fact that in selling such things as groceries and automobile sundries—to take two specific instances out of several—it has gone considerably beyond the merchandise scope of some of the very largest of its New York competitors.

"Hundreds of thousands of regular patrons?" you interrupt and repeat. "A hundred thousand people is a whole lot. Until very recently, at least, the population of what would be considered a pretty good-sized American city."

Not long ago, I asked how many people came into Macy's in the passing of an average business day. I was promptly told that several times the firm had endeavored to make an actual and systematic count of the folk who passed through each of its many entrances, but had never entirely succeeded. Once, of a busy October day, the count up to two o'clock in the afternoon had reached and passed the one hundred and twenty thousand mark. At that time each of the great escalators which ascend from the main floor was handling its maximum capacity of 7,400 persons an hour; each of the fourteen public elevators was carrying the full number of passengers permitted it by law and the store management; while a host of other folk were doing business upon the ground floor without ever

ascending to the fascinating mysteries of the land of Up-Above.

And that was October. If a man who had seen the throng of that pleasant autumn day and thought it well-nigh impossible only had returned to the big store on a December day—say the Saturday before Christmas last—he would have thought that three hundred thousand would have been far nearer the mark of the eight and one-half hours. Could more folk have been squeezed through those wide doors and into those broad aisles? It would have seemed not. Even with the aid of a whole corps of special policemen and traffic rules as scientific and as ingenious as those which regulate the vehicular traffic of nearby Fifth Avenue, it was a task of a good half-hour to get within the huge mart; another half-hour to get out again. Certain departments—notably toys—possessed navigation problems of their very own, and other departments, such as refrigerators and other household goods, were comparatively deserted. The Christmas trade is nothing if not oddly balanced.

Through a store such as this one may wander, *ad libitum*, and find a new surprise at nearly every corner of it. Certainly upon each of its floors. Nor are these to be limited, in any way, to the floors to which the public is ordinarily admitted. Once I remember coming through the eighth floor and suddenly emerging upon a clean, crisply lighted little workshop. At a long bench underneath an atelier-like window three men, fairly well-advanced in years, were working. One was engraving upon silver—the other two upon

glass. The chief of the shop explained to me that in the beginning they were Germans but they had been in Macy's so many, many years that they were today to be classed as pretty thoroughly Americanized. One of them had sat at that bench—and the one down in Fourteenth Street that had preceded it before the northward trek to Thirty-fourth Street—for over thirty-two years. The three men were artisans—of the old school and of a sort that seemingly is not bred these days.

"When they are gone I do not know where we shall go to replace them," said the superintendent.

"You will have to quit doing this sort of work?" I ventured.

He answered quickly:

"Oh no," said he, "Macy's never quits. We shall have to find others—even if we train them ourselves. It is only the material for training that worries me. American young men of today are not overfond of painstaking work of this sort."

I knew instantly what he meant. As a nation we are made up of "shortcut" experts. Perseverance, patience, a tedious attention to uninteresting detail, have seemingly but little appeal to the average young man who is looking forward to a real career for himself. To be an executive—no matter by what name or title—and in as short a time as is humanly possible is apparently the only object that he sees ahead of him. A laudable ambition to be sure. But one shudders at the mere thought of a land which should be composed entirely of executives and wishes that we might

develop more definitely a class of artisan workers, such as came to us forty, thirty, even twenty-five years ago.

The oldest of these men—the man with thirty Macy years to his credit—was chasing a hunting scene upon a great glass bowl as I bent over his desk. It was more than artisanship, that task; it was artistry. A real work of real art even though at the moment these elaborate cut-glass designs have lost a little in public favor. In their own time and order they will come back again, however. And the workmanship that made them possible will be restored to its own former high favor.

But even today there are large demands in Macy's for precisely this sort of thing. And glass grinding and engraving—which runs all the way from the making of prescription lenses for spectacles or for milady's *lorgnons* up to the cutting of an entire dinner service of the most exquisitely patterned glass or repairs to the bowl or pitcher that Bridget or Selma has so carelessly broken—is the chief factor of a shop that handles, as other parts of its day's job, jewelry and watch repairs, electro-plating of gold, copper, silver, nickel, the printing or engraving or stamping of stationery of every sort, to say nothing of leather goods of every kind and description and a thousand lesser and highly individual jobs, such as the regilding of a mirror or the transformation of an ancient whale-oil lamp into a modern incandescent one. It is small wonder that as a minimum seventy-five men are constantly employed in this shop; more, as the exigencies of this season or of that may demand them.

Yet this is but one of Macy's shops under that giant roof of Herald Square. There are others in close proximity—like those for the making of mattresses and bedding of every sort and variety and the establishment which brings broken toys back into life again. To my own Peter Pannish soul this last forever has the greatest fascination. Once, long years ago, I went into a great store in a distant city and found up under its roof a man whose sole task from one year's end to the other was the making of repairs upon toy locomotives. How I envied that man his job! And how the other day I envied the job of the Macy man who was repainting dolls' houses, one fascinating suburban villa after another. The doctor in the far corner of the room, whose patients ran all the way from lovely dolls of the most delicate china and porcelain to Teddy Bears who apparently had been badly worsted in some terrific nursery struggle, was a man with a position in which he might have genuine pride; but for the painting and re-arranging of those small houses a man, with an imagination in his soul, might almost afford to pay for the privilege of doing the work!

Five-thirty!

Again the doormen to their posts, two or three minutes in advance of the exact hour set. The minute hand upon the face of the clock no sooner reaches the exact bottom of its course, before a bell rings within the store and the great doors shut—simultaneously, as in the morning they had opened. But not permanently, of course. Dozens, hundreds, perhaps a

thousand or more shoppers still are left within the store. Each is to be accorded a full opportunity to finish his or her transactions. There is no hurry; no ostensible hurry, at any rate. It would not be good-breeding to hasten the customer upon his way. And a canon of good merchandising is good breeding.

Gradually, however, the late-stayers eliminate themselves. The big doors open to let them out, but never again this day to let newcomers in. No rule of the house is observed more inexorably. And so gradually the store empties itself.

In the meantime certain departments have already ceased to function. The salesfolk are dismissed for the night and go scurrying off. A few bring out the dust-covers and these go out upon the stock. Counters are emptied. The stock, wherever possible, is put away, and when not put away is carefully covered. Nothing is left to chance nor to dust. System reigns. And the section manager, the last to leave his department for the night, makes sure that everything there is ship-shape against the coming of another day.

Before he is gone—and he, in Macy's, is multiplied into ninety or a hundred human units—the cleaning squads are out upon the floor, rolling out their bin-like carts in orderly formation and proceeding upon the debris like a miniature army. Four, five, six hours of hard work await them. It will be midnight, perhaps later, before the store is absolutely clean again and settled down to the monotonous presence of the watchman, to await the arrival of another dawn.

In the meantime the Macy family is pouring forth into the side streets through the doorways through which they entered before nine of the morning. There is little restriction, no red-tape about their leaving. Their brass discs—each individual and bearing the employee's designating number—which they dropped in the morning have been returned to them in the course of the day for use again upon the morrow.

The only formality about their leaving—if indeed it might be called a formality—is the quick-fire inspection made by two store detectives who stand either side of the descending file at the main employees' stair, to see if any packages which are being carried out are lacking the check-room stamp and visé.

These last are the store's protection against possible theft through its inner walls. The workers who bring packages in, either in the morning or at any later time in the progress of the day, are asked to take them to a well-equipped check and storage room close by the lockers, where they may regain them at night, stamped and viséd, to go out into the open once again. Any purchases that they may make during the day follow a similar course. It is a definite and an orderly procedure. Any other would be indefinite and to an extent disorderly.

This is the reason why an occasional package—lacking the official stamp and visé of the check-room—is picked up by the keen-eyed detectives while its transporter is asked to tarry for a moment in an ante-room. In the course of an average evening there may be a half dozen of such outlaw packages detected. Their holders

are not thieves. There is not even the implication that they are thieves. They are simply trying to ignore a fair and open-minded rule which the store has made, not alone for its own protection but for the protection of every man and woman in its employ. Such is the explanation which the assistant store manager makes to them before he dismisses them, at just a few minutes before six.

"We believe in explaining things," he will tell you afterwards. "For we believe that we gain the very best service from the Macy people by not asking them to work in the dark. If we make a rule and its rulings sometimes puzzle them—sometimes even seem a little arbitrary, perhaps—we tell them why we have had to make the rule and almost invariably find them satisfied and quite content."

The packages, themselves, are detained overnight. The store reserves the right to make an inspection of them. Such inspection, even when it is made, rarely ever shows the package to be illicit. It merely is carelessness. And the thoughtless worker to whom it is returned in the morning is merely asked not to be careless again, but to make a full and co-operative use of the facilities which are provided for the comfort, and the protection, of him and his fellows; which generally is all that is necessary to be said.

By six the store is practically emptied of its workers. After that hour any one leaving it must have a pass and be interviewed by the night superintendent at the single door left open for exit. Night work in the

Macy store is little and far between these days—save possibly in the Christmas season and even then it is held at a minimum; an astonishing minimum when one comes to compare it with the Christmas seasons of, say, a mere twenty years ago. The state law says that aside from that fortnight of holiday turmoil, the women workers of the store, who are considerably in the majority, shall not work more than fifty-four hours or oftener than one night a week and then not later than nine o'clock. In turn, the store, following the workings of the statute, designates Thursday as its late employment night. If, because of some emergency, it wishes to deviate from this, it must have a special permit.

As a matter of fact, however, Macy's anticipates the law; goes far ahead of it. It finds its women workers not only willing to work the occasional Thursday night shifts, but, with the practical advantages of a full dinner furnished without cost and overpay to come into the reckoning, for the most part extremely anxious. And it reminds the solicitous legislators up at Albany that it was not a statute that abolished the pernicious habit of keeping the stores open for business evenings and late in the evening, but the progressive thought of the store managers of New York, themselves. These last have yielded little to the sentimentalists in real looking forward. Theirs have been the practical problems—not the least of these that of the education of a shopping public which seemingly had demanded that the big department-stores of New York should be kept open evenings—some evenings throughout the

entire year—and all evenings in a certain small and terrible season; and without consideration of the task this custom imposed upon the patient folk who were serving them. Out of such lack of consideration, out of such selfishness, if you please, was a great practical and moral reform in merchandising evolved. Which was, in itself, no little triumph.

II. Organization in a Modern Store

I LIKE to think of modern business as a huge, great single machine; or better still, a group of little machines gathered together and functioning as one. It is a simile that I have used time and time again. To feel that some single achievement of industry—of manufacturing or of merchandising—is as well organized and as well balanced as the many mechanisms that are laboring in its behalf, seems to bring the most single complete picture of modern business of the sort that our press has ofttimes been pleased to term "big business."

And sometimes I like to think of these "big businesses"—with their hundreds and thousands of human units—as armies. At no time is this last comparison more apt than when one comes to apply it to the modern department-store, as we today know it in America. For, even if you wish to grant an entire dissimilarity of purpose, one of these huge institutions has more than one point of similarity with an army. Not alone in numbers can this parallel be made, but quite as quickly in organization. While, to return to our first simile, it, too, is a big machine—humanized. Its parts are carefully co-ordinated so that the whole

will function with the least possible friction. Like an army it is officered with its generalissimo, its under generals, its colonels, its captains, its lieutenants, its sergeants and its corporals. The difference is only in nomenclature. The structure is quite the same. For, when you come to analyze, you will find the divisions of labor and of authority quite corresponding to similar divisions in the army. Officer, "non-com" and private—each contributes his more or less important part; each is a necessary factor in the success of the enterprise.

Like an army, the department-store of modern America is designed to move constantly forward. The "big-chief" scans his balance sheets, the rise and fall of the curves of his outgo and income averages, the tremendously meaningful jagged red lines of his graphic charts, quite as carefully as the army general keeps track of the movement of his forces upon the maps which his topographists send him. He gathers his officers roundabout him and plans the strategy of business with the same shrewd foresight that must be observed by the successful military leader. He must be a promoter of morale throughout his forces, even down to the newest and the lowest-paid clerk. There must be constant liaison between the general and the private in the ranks.

In considerable detail this parallel can be carried out. Soon, however, it must come to an end. That is, it ends in so far as Macy's is concerned. For the army at Broadway and Thirty-fourth Street is neither an army

of offense nor of defense. Its sole position always is upon the front line of service.

At the head of the organization there are the three brother partners who inherited their original interest in the great business from their father, the late Isidor Straus, who, with their mother, lost his life in the supreme catastrophe of the sinking of the *Titanic*. In 1914 they acquired Nathan Straus' interest by purchase. These men, Jesse Isidor, the president, Percy S., the vice-president, and Herbert N., the secretary and treasurer, are its triple head and front. While each has trained himself to be a merchandise specialist of the highest order, there is none that knows the details of Macy's better than his brothers—they share equally in the supreme authority that directs the business. Directly responsible to them, in turn, is its general manager, its merchandise council and its advertising and financial departments.

As I write these paragraphs, the great chart of the Macy organization lies upon my desk. It is a vast and fascinating thing. With the lines extending upon it here and there and everywhere from the box which holds the triple-head, branching and rebranching here and there and again, it looks not unlike a giant map; a chart, if you prefer to have it so. And so it is, a chart upon which the steersmen of so vast and so responsible an enterprise safely pick their course upon a seemingly unending journey.

"Government by draughting-board," sniffed an old-time business man to me once, when I was trying to explain to him in some detail how a great steel manu-

facturing plant of the Middle West attempted to accomplish its huge job, economically and efficiently, by the use of graphic charts. And he added: "I'd like to see *myself* held down by blue-print authority."

To which, after all this while, I should like to reply:

"I should like to see a concern, as big and as successful as Macy's, operated without a careful charting of its always difficult path."

Yet, as a matter of hard fact, Macy's, any more than any other big and well-planned business organism of today, never binds itself to go blindly and unthinkingly upon the lines of the charts—and nowhere else. The real trick of executive direction seems to be to know when to follow these lines and when more or less to completely disregard them. Rule-of-thumb can never again overcome the rules of averages, of percentages or of economic laws. But the rule of wit and of human understanding can ofttimes be used to temper this first group and sometimes with astonishingly successful results.

A glance or two at this imposing organization chart lying before me begins to show the many, many ramifications of the huge Macy business tree. It shows, for instance, how, under the direction of the merchandise council, are four large branches of store activity more or less inter-related: the handling of Macy's own merchandise (meaning particularly that which is either made in the store's own factories or at least made under its direct supervision); the work of the large force of buyers; the comparison department

(an important phase of the business to which we shall come in our own good time); and the foreign offices.

In the financial department, the controller is the quite logical chief. His general duties are fairly obvious. To help him in them, he has, under his direction, the chief cashier, the salary office, the auditing department, the depositors' account department—this last a most distinctive Macy feature—and a statistical department.

Obvious, too, is the greater part of the work of the publicity department. It includes in addition to the advertising manager—always an important factor in the modern department-store and particularly so in the case of Macy's—a display manager. It is the job of the first of these men to tell the public of the merchandise being offered for sale at the sign of the red star; the job of his compeer to see that it is properly displayed to them.

And, finally, there is the general manager—last but not least. Connected by an exceedingly direct and much-traveled line with the general offices upon the seventh floor of the store are Mr. W. J. Wells, the store's general manager, and his advisory council. For the G. M., big as he is always, has need of much advice. Upon his broad and efficient shoulders are placed such a tremendous array of responsibilities that one cannot but marvel at the sheer efficiency of the man—to say nothing of his reserves of physical and mental strength—who can hold down such a job. Yet, at Macy's, the man himself disclaims any superhuman powers.

"I am merely the automatic governor to this big machine," he will tell you, in his own simple, direct way. "In fact, if the machine always functioned one hundred per cent. efficient, there really would be no need either of me or of my job. It is because no machine that is built of human cogs and cams and levers and pulleys may ever work at one hundred per cent. efficiency that I, or some other man, must sit in this office. It is our job to meet the unusual and the unforeseen. We take up slack here and loosen there."

The translation of this is unmistakable. If the three men upon the high seventh floor of the institution are its steersmen, this man, who has his office at the rear of its broad mezzanine balcony, is at least its chief engineer. And to assist him he has five assistant engineers—assistant general managers, in reality. The habit of simile leads one into odd designations of title. Each of these five assistant general managers—we shall stand by the nomenclature of the store—in turn has a large number of departments reporting to him. While in addition to them and ranking as virtual assistant managers are the superintendent of the detective bureau and that of the building, itself.

The general manager, himself, is charged with the general duty of engaging, training and educating employees. He regulates salaries. He controls the transfer and discharge of employees. He is charged with the enforcement of all rules and regulations. He is the final authority to decide whether or not merchandise is returnable, for refund, exchange or credit. He also is the authority who adjusts all claims or con-

WHERE MILADY OF MANHATTAN SHOPS

The vast ground floor of Macy's is, in itself, a mark of much interest and variety

troversies with customers. And he is the one to whom employees may appeal if they feel they are being treated unfairly by their superiors. A man-sized job truly! And because no one man, short of a superhuman at any rate, could ever perform all of its various and perplexing functions, Mr. Wells has his five assistants. In the event of his absence as well as that of any one of them the man below rises temporarily into his immediate superior's job.

It is the major task of the first of these assistants to direct the work of the floor superintendents—eight of these—and through them that of the section managers and the actual sales forces; nearly two thousand people all told. In other words, his job is the selling. To this great force and to the countless problems that must arise in its day-by-day direction there is added the oversight of the personal shoppers' service. Which means in turn the furnishing of guides throughout the departments to shoppers who ask for them; finding translators for folk to whom the intricacies of our tongue are unsolved mysteries and, in certain specific and necessary cases, the sending of merchandise with a member of the sales force into the homes of Macy's patrons.

The second and the third assistant managers are the heads of non-selling organizations within the store, the fourth and the fifth handle the training and the educational departments, respectively. The second assistant has, as his especial responsibility, the merchandise checkers, the collectors, the stock clerks, the cashiers and the interior mail and messenger service. The other non-selling assistant general manager supervises

the receiving department, the department of money orders and adjustments, the supply department, the delivery, the receiving, the time office, the manufacturing, and sundry other smaller specialties of the store; small, however, only in a comparative sense. Taken by themselves they quickly would be seen to be sizable indeed.

The tasks of most of these departments are fairly obvious from their names. Some of the others we shall see in a bit of detail as we go further into the store and its workings. In other chapters we shall describe what the great delivery department is supposed to accomplish, and actually does accomplish, the scope and plan and reach of the departments of training and of employment, and some others, too. It takes no great strain upon the imagination to conceive of the importance of the detective bureau's work, nor that of the superintendent of buildings.

So much, then, for a preliminary bird's-eye view of a mammoth machine, not a machine for turning out shoes or typewriters or paper, but for buying and selling all these things and many, many more. And as you read in the earlier part of this book, the huge mechanism did not spring into its being in a year, or in a decade, or even in a generation. It represents slow, hard, steady growth; and slow, hard, steady growth it is still having.

There are now one hundred and eighteen departments in Macy's and yet, out of many thousands of separate and distinct items, there are some things that the store does not sell. Some of these commodities are handled by other great department-stores. But

while Macy's may and does follow a charted path, it is its own chart and its own path. It never follows blindly the pathways of others. So, for instance, it does not sell pianos. In this particular case, at least, the reason is not hard to discover. Remember, all the while, that Macy's sells for cash and for cash alone—always and forever; and then consider that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, pianos are sold upon the installment plan. The installment plan is entirely outside of the Macy scheme of salesmanship. It may or may not be a good plan. But to adopt it Macy's would either have to change its selling policy or else dispose of so few pianos that it would not be profitable to maintain a department for them. This is the alpha and the omega of the piano, as far as Macy's is concerned. It has no intention either of changing its deep-rooted and well-founded selling policy, nor, on the other hand, of establishing a little-used and possibly unprofitable department. Upon this decision it stands quite content.

Yet assuredly Macy's is organized to sell nearly all of the necessities of life—and an unusually large number of the luxuries in addition. From hosiery to ice cream, from women's suits to artists' materials, from eye-glasses to sausages, and from petticoats to ukeleles, the list of the store's wares is almost without limit. Other furniture is not hedged about by the same merchandising traditions and restrictions as are pianos; there are in the upper floor of this great market-place pieces of household furnishings whose prices run well into the hundreds and even thousands of dollars, to

say nothing of rare Oriental rugs, fine paintings and other works of art.

These one hundred and eighteen departments have been arranged after long study and experience and well thought out plans. In fact, so many conflicting and intricate features have entered into their planning that it is hardly possible within the space of these pages to give more than the broad general policy of the department organizations of the store. Yet it is another of these fairly obvious principles that upon its main floor—where its space, square foot by square foot, is by far at its highest value, and where there is a maximum of accessibility—should be displayed the items that sell the most quickly and the most readily. This follows the very reasonable theory that goods for which there is the most popular demand should at all times be the most accessible. Varying slightly in specific cases and conditions, as one ascends into the five upper selling floors of the store, the merchandise falls more and more into classifications that call for care and deliberation in the purchasing. Thus, upon the main floor, one will find such articles as umbrellas, books, candy, notions, and the like—to make but a few instances out of many—while upon the second, there will be yardage goods, linens, shoes and so forth.

Parenthetically, it may be set down that in older days, yardage goods—meaning cloths and weaves of almost every sort—never used to be found above the ground floor of any department-store. Retail merchandising tradition in New York suffered a body blow some years ago when Macy's sent them upstairs. Even

the men who worked in the department protested against the change. A sizable proportion of their income was and is in their commissions upon their total volume of sales. They could not see the sales upstairs.

"For two cents I'd resign," said one of the veterans, just as the change was announced.

No one offered him the two cents, however, and he remained. And the following year saw the department reach a new high level for total sales in its yard goods.

One large reason for this in Macy's is the unusual accessibility of the upper floors from the street level. It required little or no effort for the customer to get to the second floor, or, for that matter, to the sixth. The store's unusual and fairly marvelous system of escalators, well-placed, smooth running, always available, and to be safely used by even a rheumatic or a cripple, bring these self-same upper floors at all times within easy reach of the street, and without the use of the firm's generous plant of elevators. With the exception of the abnormal stress and strain of the holiday season, the vertical system of Macy's transportation is never very seriously taxed.

To those upper floors, also, go the folk whose purchases necessitate the fitting of something or other to the human frame. As we have just seen, shoes are upon the second floor. On the third is the women's wearing apparel, with special dressing-room facilities for trying on and fitting. Similar conveniences are to be found in the men's clothing department upon the fifth floor.

Rugs, upholstery and art objects generally require more time for selection than do shoes and socks, more room for display as well. They go, then, quite naturally to the broad spaces of the fourth floor. The same qualities, only somewhat emphasized, apply to furniture, which is shown and sold upon the sixth. That the restaurant is relegated to the eighth floor is due in large part to the necessity for having cooking odors where they can be carried away without reaching other parts of the store; as well as to considerations in regard to the economy of floor space for an enterprise that is active during only a part of the day.

Minor changes in the arrangement of all these departments are constantly and forever under way. A great market-place like Macy's never stays entirely put. Special considerations, special problems, unforeseen merchandising plans may at any moment make it not only advisable but necessary to change the location or the relative space of any or all the departments. At Christmas-time the unusual pressure upon some of them, accompanied by a slacking in others—unfortunately (or fortunately?) shoppers cannot be everywhere and at the same moment—means many temporary changes—so one department must give some of its space for a time to its neighbor—a debt possibly to be repaid at some other season of the year, when thoughts are not on toys, or candies or jewelry, but upon such serious things as carpets or refrigerators.

An interesting sidelight upon the intensive study that Macy's gives the psychology of its interior arrangements is furnished in the fact that, on the theory that

the less deadly of the species has an inherent aversion to department-stores, men's furnishing goods in these emporiums should generally be displayed upon the main floor, and just as close to a street entrance as is possible. Macy's has been no exception to this rule. A man, even when he is in a mood for spending, wants it over with as soon as possible. He is impatient of the slightest delay. On the other hand, his wife or daughter will make of shopping a kind of ritual. And, perhaps, because of that, she is often the more intelligent and discriminating buyer.

Today, however, space on the main floor of the larger stores in New York is proving so valuable for goods that appeal to women shoppers, that some of them are trying to find a new method of appealing to the man-in-a-hurry. And so there has come to be a distinct trend toward putting men's goods upon a high upper floor, but with special express elevator service, so that their purchasers can get in and out with a minimum use of their valuable time.

That part of the organization of Macy's which always has, always has had, and always will have the chief visual appeal to the public, is the staff of sales people with whom it comes in constant contact. Again and again, as we come to consider the minute workings of this great machine of modern business, we shall find its human factor looming larger before our very noses. We can not dodge it. We have no desire to dodge it. In fact, we find it at all times the most fascinating feature of our study. It is no part of this narrative to

decide which part of the whole corps of workers in the store is the most important to it—it would be similar and quite as easy to try to give an opinion as to the relative importance of the mainspring and the balance-wheel of a watch—but it is enough to say here, as we shall say again and again, that the girl behind the counter—to say nothing of the man—is an absolutely indispensable feature. By her it rises; by her it might easily come tumbling down.

Let me illustrate by the testimony of a young woman who recently was a girl behind the counter at Macy's:

"It surely is true," she says, "that we salespeople can do a great deal to increase the business and the number of customers. Some of these last are, of course, nearly hopeless—they would try the patience of Job, himself—and then again there are the others who are most appreciative of your services. It was interesting to me, when first I went behind the counter, to see how many of my customers would say 'thank you.' I found that nearly all of them will, if only you make a real effort to please them. And the majority of the Macy salesforce does try to help a customer in any way that she needs help. One day I observed this incident, which is almost typical: A customer approached our counter and put her bag down upon it. A saleswoman went to her at once, saying:

" 'May I help you, madam?'

"The customer shook her head, a negative; she was merely trying to adjust her veil, she explained. But our saleswoman was resourceful in her tact.

" 'Well, maybe, I can assist you with that,' she

insisted, and straightway proceeded to do so. That was her notion of the service of our store."

It is incidents just like this—seemingly small when you take them apart and place them out by themselves—but in the aggregate very real and very important, that make for a store its lifelong customers. Let the young woman continue. Like a good many other young women in the store she is a college graduate and also possessed of a power for shrewd observation.

". . . One woman bought some gloves from me and while she waited for her change showed me her shopping-list. It was miles long, seemingly, and appeared to include everything from a safety-pin to a toy submarine. As she conned it, she said that she had shopped in Macy's for years, and nowhere else. In fact, I remember that she said that she would be completely lost in any other store. . . . Others came back, bringing a single glove that they had purchased a year or more before and wanting another pair just like them, they had been so satisfactory. . . .

"Not all of them are quite so cheery, however. Occasionally some unreasonable and irate customer would appear, storming at having to wait a few precious moments for her change, or at not being able to find the same glove that her friend purchased the week before—the chances being quite good that her friend might have bought the glove in another store. These are the times that test the wit and diplomacy and resource of the girl behind the counter.

"A day behind a counter is filled to the brim with experiences—you have your finger on the pulse of a

part of the life of New York—you are a part of a huge and important organization, and you come into contact with the world in general. Even customers coming to our glove counter furnished us with interesting moments. One in particular came to me to get some of our children's woolen gloves. He was a robust old man—about fifty-five, I'd have said—but he told me he was sixty-nine. He said he had just bought the same gloves elsewhere for over twice as much. (I said I didn't doubt that in the least.) And then he went on to say his wife and daughters shopped in stores where the name meant a great deal, but that he always came to Macy's because he came for the merchandise he got. He ended by saying he was a happy man, with three romping grandchildren, that he daily handled over two thousand men, but couldn't handle one woman. I should like to see him try to run Macy's and have to handle some six thousand men and women."

The personnel of each of the selling floors of the store is under the direction of an organization captain, whose precise title is floor superintendent. He has an understudy—or, as he is known in the parlance of the place, a relief—so that the floor is never, even for a minute, without an executive head.

This floor superintendent is a man of considerable discretionary powers. He must be. These powers are being constantly brought into play as he is called upon to decide the merits of this or that customer's claim. He is a man of tact and judgment, both of

which qualities are kept in constant operation. Upon his floor he is the direct representative of the management and so looks out for its interests. From his desk upon the floor headquarters he directs and supervises, yet he constantly circulates throughout his various departments and sees to it himself that the matters for which he is responsible are thoroughly carried out. The orderliness of the floor is his special concern, and when, from time to time, it becomes necessary to shift salesclerks from one department to another—as in the case of the numberless special sales requiring extra help—it is he who engineers the details of the transfer.

Acting as lieutenants to the floor superintendents are the section managers, who, as we have already seen, were in the store of yesterday known as "floorwalkers." But in the Macy's of today something considerably different is meant from the superannuated and somewhat pompous gentleman who used to condescend, when we asked for the location of silverware, to wave us away with a cryptic "second-aisle-to-the-right-rear-of-the-store." It now means a live, up-to-date, agreeable gentleman, with a man's-size job to fill.

Not only must he ascertain the customers' needs and direct all of them, plainly and courteously, but he has direct supervision over all of the employees within his section. He is held responsible for their deportment and it is his duty to observe, as far as possible, their mental, moral and physical condition. He must be able to detect errors in the methods used by his salesclerks, and in order that he may be in a position to teach them correct methods, he must, himself, be master of

the store system. Parts of this constantly are being changed, so that in addition to all of these other qualities, the successful section manager must possess an alert mind. The importance of his work may be visualized to some slight extent at least by the manual which is prepared for his guidance. This is a loose-leaf book of some fifty closely printed pages; the number varying according to the changes in the store system which are made from time to time. Just to give you a slight idea of what this captain of a merchandising army has upon his mind, consider that under the division entitled "Section Managers' Daily Duties" there are forty-six different items, and under "Miscellaneous Duties" thirteen. Moreover, he must have at his instant command all the technical procedure regarding transactions and forms, refunds, complaints, transfers, employees' shopping, the Internal Revenue Law, accidents, and then some more. I submit this as a job requiring all that a man has of fortitude and delicacy!

Salesmanship is the thing that really made R. H. Macy & Company and it therefore is patent that they should consider the actual sellers of their goods as the very backbone of their organization. In another place it is related how, in the department of training, employees are taught to sell, and in another something of the working out of the psychology of the customer and the salesclerk. Education counts. It helps to make the salesclerk a vital factor of the store organization.

Macy policy sees to it that the clerk is, in so far as it

is possible, kept interested in his or her work. There are, as we have already begun to understand, as few rules governing their conduct, dress and liberties as are consistent with the smooth, economical operation of the business. On the other hand, there is all possible encouragement for them to become familiar and even expert with the things that they sell. In many of the departments special booklets have been prepared as aids in selling the particular line of merchandise carried. That for the stationery department, for instance, covers: Paper, with its history from the earliest times, its manufacture, sizes and characteristics; engraving, with a full description of the processes connected therewith; fountain-pens and their manufacture; desk accessories, commercial stationery and the like. Ambition to excel in salesmanship is further stimulated by taking clerks through factories where their lines are made, and by exhibiting motion pictures of the manufacturing of these goods.

Here, then, is the store's most direct contact with its patrons. There are others, however, to be classed as at least fairly direct. Take that big and comfortable restaurant up on the eighth floor. It is one of the real landmark's among eating-places of New York, a world city of good eating.

Its own magnitude may easily be guessed from the fact that in a single business day it feeds more people than almost if not any other in the town. Translated into cold figures this means that there is an average of twenty-five hundred lunches bought by customers each day that the store is open; with a maximum on

extremely busy days reaching as high as five thousand. Figures are impressive. Yet these do not include either afternoon teas or late breakfasts for both of which there is a considerable clientele.

To serve these hungry folk who come to Macy's there are two hundred waitresses, buss-boys and other employees upon the floor, besides fifty in the general kitchen, twenty in the bakery and eight in the ice cream factory. And if you still try to doubt that this restaurant is not of itself a real business and one to be reckoned with, consider that in the course of an average year its patrons consume—among other things—two thousand barrels of flour, fifty-two tons of sugar, seven hundred and fifty thousand eggs, ninety-three thousand six hundred pounds of butter, two thousand bags of potatoes, and nearly half a million quarts of ice cream. This latter item, however, covers the ice cream used at the soda fountain and in the employees' and men's club restaurants.

The employees' lunchroom—conducted on the cafeteria plan—serves four thousand men and women each working day. It provides tasty and wholesome food at a cost that makes it entirely possible to eat to repletion for twenty cents or less. Soups, for instance, are three cents a portion, and meat dishes six, while other items, such as sandwiches, vegetables, desserts and the like are correspondingly low.

Nor is this luncheon the sole restaurant resource of the employees within this institution. In the men's club nearly a thousand more of the Macy family eat their midday meal each day; and eat very well indeed.

Here the meal is served at a flat rate: at the uniform and moderate cost of thirty cents.

Under the same general management direction (the third assistant general manager) as the restaurant is the store's supply department—not different very much from the supply department of a big railroad or manufacturing unit—which supplies everything for its consumption, from coal to string; the manufacturing departments in which are produced glass, mattresses, printing, engraving, custom-made shirts, millinery, picture frames and paper novelties; the candy factory over near Tenth Avenue and Thirty-fifth Street, which completely fills a big modern six-story building; the telephone service; and the so-called public service department.

These last facilities command our attention for a passing moment. The telephone is, of course, the nerve-system of the Macy organization; nothing else. Its chief ganglion is a far-reaching switchboard on which little lights twinkle on and off and at which at a single relay sit nine competent operators in addition to a corps of inspectors and supervisors. The big board, from which run fifty-nine trunk-wires to the neighboring Fitzroy exchange, is none too large. Year in and year out it handles an average of nine thousand calls a day. And in the Christmas season this number easily is doubled and trebled.

The public service department means exactly what it is called. It is at the service of the public. In concrete form it is a free information bureau, where theater seats and railroad and Pullman tickets may be

purchased at face value—and not one cent beyond, not even the usual moderate fifty-cent advance of the hotel agencies—where astute and marvelously informed young men and women, with a miniature library of reference books at their immediate command, stand ready and willing to answer all the reasonable questions that may be thrust at them. To it is added a postal office, a telegraph office and public telephones for both local and long distance service.

The third assistant general manager of the store also has within his bailiwick the important department of mail orders and adjustments. Although in the technical sense of the word Macy's today has no mail order department—having been forced to abandon its once promising beginning along this line because of a sheer lack of room in which to handle it—the store each year actually receives thousands of orders for its goods by mail, from folk who, for one reason or another, find it inconvenient to visit it. These are received and systematically handled in this very department. Under its adjustment division comes the extremely interesting bureau of investigation, which concerns itself with all complaints, and the correspondence bureau, which handles more than ninety-five per cent. of the mail of the house.

It requires no particular keenness of imagination to see that, even with complaints reduced to a minimum and letter-writing and handling to a fine science, there is an infinite amount of detail in these two departments alone—detail that reaches into every part of the store

and that necessitates a clever combination of system and diplomacy.

The exposition of the workings of the Macy organization is yet to lead us into other chapters in which various separate subjects of interest will be treated at greater length than here; but now is the time and place to focus our attention upon one of the small, but extremely important, departments that works unseen—but not unfelt—behind the scenes. It is known as the comparison department and the work that it does is of vast importance in the operation of the store. Its functions are unending—and continuous. Macy's policy of underselling its competitors is an unhalting one.

I have before me a Macy advertisement from a New York newspaper of recent date. In a conspicuous place in it there is a card which says: "For sixty-two years we have sold dependable merchandise at lowest in the city prices. We are doing so now and shall continue to do so." This was published at a time when the recent reaction from the extremely high prices of the war period already had begun to set in; and yet this was the big store's sole acknowledgment of the deflation sentiment—to say nothing of hysteria—which was sweeping the town. Its competitors had been offering their wares at reductions of from twenty to fifty per cent. from their topmost prices, but, serene and secure in the knowledge that its policy in selling had been consistently adhered to, Macy's only reiterated that its prices would continue to be the lowest in the city—quality for quality.

To hold fast to this policy, through thick and thin, has not always been easy. Macy's has fought some royal battles in its behalf—yet not so much because it was a policy as because with the big store in Herald Square it has become a principle of the most fundamental sort.

More than twenty years ago the principle became extremely difficult to maintain, because of the growing tendency of the proprietors of articles, so patented or copyrighted as to make their imitation practically impossible, to attempt to fix their final retail sales price. It no longer became the mere question of whether Macy's or any other store would have the right to undersell its competitors; it became the fundamental question of whether the great centuries-old open market of the world could continue to remain an open market, in the interest of the consumer; and not a closed market, in the interest of the producer. To maintain the first of these positions, in behalf of its patrons, Macy's entered upon and won, almost single-handed, one of the notable legal battles in the history of this country.

As far back as 1901—if you are a stickler for exact dates—this whole question of price maintenance became an acute issue with Macy's. It came to pass that when the prominent publishers of America formed an association, one prime purpose of which was to fix the prices at which their books would sell at retail, the store quickly saw that if this trust agreement was permitted to stand unchallenged, its cardinal principle of underselling its competitors, would have to be sacrificed.

Macy's did not propose to make such a sacrifice—to permit its customers to be sacrificed—without a protest. And such a protest it prepared to make.

Isidor Straus, then the head of the business, sat in the office of his friend and counsel, Edmond E. Wise, in a downtown office. Mr. Wise put the thing frankly and without equivocation before his client. He said that it would be a hard legal fight, no doubt of that, but that a great principle was at stake; the keen mind of the lawyer was convinced of the economic fallacy of the position of the publishers' association.

Quietly Mr. Straus told his attorney to go ahead. He said that he would fight the fight, to the last ditch. No expense was to be spared. The case would be carried, if necessary, in every instance to the highest court of appeal.

Accordingly, Mr. Wise prepared a suit against the American Publishers' Association which holds the record for appeal in the history of jurisprudence in this country. Three times it went up to the Court of Appeals of the State of New York; finally, after nine years of legal battle, it was carried to the United States Supreme Court, which, after due deliberation, decided every point in favor of R. H. Macy & Company.

That was in December, 1913. Early in the following May the firm had the satisfaction of having the publishers hand over a check on the Park National Bank for $140,000. This sum represented a settlement for the difficulties that Macy's had had to undergo for more than a dozen years past in getting stock for its book department. Ofttimes it was

necessary to follow devious paths indeed to gain this end—and still hold fast to the fundamental underselling policy of the store. Sometimes the store had to go so far as to send to other retail stores to buy a certain volume, at the full retail price, and then resell it to its patrons, at its customary ten per cent. off the price of the store at which it had just purchased it. So much if you please for the expense of standing by a principle!

A short time after this signal victory of Macy's, certain large manufacturers of patented articles, who for a time had sustained in the lower courts their claim to a fixed retail price standard, sought definitely to control Macy retail prices upon their products. Macy's, however, defied them, and the Victor Talking Machine Company, one of the leading adherents of price maintenance, brought an action in the United States courts to compel Macy's adherence to the rules for resale at a certain price. Again there was a royal battle and again Macy's triumphed signally, for on final appeal, the United States Supreme Court again decided in favor of the store in Herald Square, on every one of its contentions. Macy's then retaliated and brought suit against the Victor Company, under the Sherman Law. In a bitterly contested action, which culminated in one of the longest trials before a jury on record—consuming more than ten weeks—Macy's recovered a judgment of $150,000, and a counsel fee of $35,000; after which no paths apparently were left open to the manufacturers who sought to maintain the retail prices

that suited them best. Court decisions seemingly blocked all possible pathways.

One path did remain, however—legislation. Effort was made to pass a measure down at Washington to permit and sustain retail price maintenance, which in reality meant the emasculation of the Supreme Court's decisions. When that measure came to a hearing before the Interstate Commerce Committee of the House one of the Macy partners, accompanied by Mr. Wise, the store's counsel, and Mr. E. A. Filene, the well-known Boston merchant, came before it in opposition. Up almost to that hour, Macy's had gone it alone. Now the attention of the country was focussed upon its fight and the National Retail Dry Goods Association came in with both its sympathy and its active co-operation—hence the appearance of Mr. Filene, who made a most excellent argument in support of the Macy contention.

It was shown definitely to the members of this House committee that many, if not all, branded and patented articles took a retail profit of from fifty to seventy-five per cent. The member of the Macy firm took a watch nationally advertised at $2.50 and duplicated it with a watch which his store sold at sixty-five cents, going so far as to take the two watches apart so as to show conclusively that the one was quite as good as the other. Certain other commodities went under similarly critical analyses. When the hearing was completed, the committee laughed the bill out of court. Since then the question of price maintenance by the original producer has been permitted to drop. Macy's had won its hard-fought fight; won it cleanly and honestly. By per-

formance it had made good its statements that it proposed wherever it was humanly possible to undersell its competitors. That was no idle phrase.

It is indeed one thing to make a statement—whether in print or by word of mouth—and another and oft-times a far more difficult thing to make good that statement by performance. No one knows this better than Macy's. Having set down such a definite and distinct statement it must be prepared to make good. It must be so covered and protected at every possible point that if challenged it can give a good account of itself. In fact, challenges come in every day—they have been coming in every day for a good many years now—and the house continues to make good its statement willingly—even joyfully. Here it is, then, that the comparison department functions; here it is that the original fundamental policy of Rowland H. Macy—to buy and sell only for cash—strictly adhered to during the sixty-four years' life of the business—makes it possible for the house to make good.

How, then, is it done?

The answer is easy.

Suppose, if you will, that Smith, Brown & Jones are having a special sale of Mother Hubbard wrappers. There are advertised as their regular $4.97 stock, marked down (at a heartbreaking sacrifice) to $3.79. Manifestly, it is up to R. H. Macy & Company to sell the same quality of Mother Hubbard for less than $3.79, if they are to live up to their oft-stated policy. It is quite as patent that Macy's must know just what

kind of wrappers Smith, Brown & Jones are selling, if it is to compete on an exact basis. Nothing simpler. One of the Macy staff of shoppers is hurried forthwith to the scene of the bargain and, purchasing one of the garments, brings it back post-haste to the Macy comparison department. Furthermore, it is in this department by ten o'clock of the morning of the sale. It is then matched as closely as possible with a Mother Hubbard from the Macy stock, and the two garments compared, point by point. If, after careful examination, it is found that Macy's is charging more, or even the same price, for equal quality, then its prices are immediately marked down to a figure at least six per cent. lower than that advertised by the other store. And this, mind you, is not an exceptional performance but a daily procedure in the carrying out of which an exceptionally alert woman manager and twenty expert shoppers are constantly kept busy.

If you make inquiry regarding the ins and outs of this remarkable policy you will find that it is far broader than you may have imagined. Here, again, is proof of the pudding. It is a typical letter, received from a customer and copied verbatim, with only the name left out:

November 12, 1920.

R. H. Macy & Co.,
New York City.

Dear Sirs:

I purchased a banjo clock at $13.89 from you on Tuesday. Yesterday I saw the same clock, with same works, etc., identical in every way, at ———'s, for $11.25. Now, inasmuch as you claim that you sell goods at the very lowest figure, I think that is too much difference in price to overlook. I trust that I shall

receive your check for the difference in the amount, otherwise please call for the clock at once. I purchased clock in the basement.

Yours very truly,

This letter was received by the store and acknowledged that very day. It then was turned over to the comparison department, from which a shopper was despatched to the store at which the customer claimed to have seen the clock for less money. The shopper reported that the claim was correct, and a check was immediately forwarded to the customer for the difference between the price which she paid for the clock and six per cent. less than the other store's price for it. Nor did the matter end there. All this kind of clocks in the basement were at once repriced to conform to the adjustment made with the customer.

There are, too, the occasional tests made by customers who, while they are not dissatisfied, cannot believe that the low-price policy can be consistently carried out. As an example, this half-jocular letter:

November 15, 1920.

R. H. Macy & Company,
Broadway & 34th Street,
New York.

Gentlemen:

Lest you regard this as a complaint from an ordinary .22 calibre chronic kicker let me say in the first place that I merely want to see to what extent you will make good on your brazen claim to sell goods at a lower price than other stores. Now then:

On November 10th, I purchased a toy "cash register" bank in your toy department for $1.98. (I want the kid to learn frugality better than I did.) On November 14th my wife saw the same toy at Hahne's in Newark, N. J., for exactly the same

price. So far, so good. It was worth it. But, Mr. Macy, you said your prices were *less*.

Besides, I have an account at Hahne's. By the time I would have needed to pay for that bank there would have been enough in it to settle the bill.

Here is your chance, but I'm from Missouri.

Yours,

_____

The answer to this complaint was prompt and to the point. It reads:

R. H. MACY & CO.
HERALD SQUARE, NEW YORK
December 4, 1920.

Mr. _____

_____

_____

Dear Sir:

We acknowledge your letter of November 24th, with regard to a toy-bank, which you purchased from us for $1.98. We have investigated your complaint and find, as you state, Hahne & Co. in Newark are selling this article at the same price at which you purchased it from us. Our price on these banks is now $1.89, in keeping with our claim that we sell dependable merchandise for "lowest-in-the-city" prices.

We appreciate your courtesy in calling this matter to our attention and also for the opportunity to demonstrate the upholding of our policy. A refund of nine cents in stamps is enclosed.

Yours very truly,
(Signed) R. H. MACY & Co.
_____ Mgr.
Bureau of Mail Order and Adjustment.

Of course this complaint was trivial, the sum involved small, and Macy's must quickly have realized that the man who wrote the letter was not particularly serious. Yet that made no difference. The matter was adjusted; even though the process of adjustment

involved a shopper's trip to Newark and considerable clerical work—in all several times the cost of the tiny bank. Yet the matter *was* adjusted and all the toy-banks of that kind were at once reduced in price, to say nothing of a satisfied patron made for the store.

There is another sort of complaint that, at times, keeps the comparison department pretty busy. Women frequently will stop at a counter in the store, examine an article and then exclaim:

"Hm-m—$6.74 for that! Why, I saw the same thing today at Jinx, Bobb & Company's for $5.90."

A mere passing comment which, in the old days of merchandising, might easily have been ignored. In Macy's it is not ignored. The clerk who hears this remark makes a note of it and sends through to the comparison department what is technically known as a customer's complaint. Immediate investigation is made, the prices checked up, and, if the casual shopper is right, Macy's prices are at once readjusted to the six per cent. below the competitor's charges. It has been found, however, that nearly ninety per cent. of this sort of complaints are incorrect. Two articles, in separate stores, may look so nearly alike that a casual inspection will not reveal any difference, and, therefore, competing goods must often be subjected to expert examination and even to analysis. A magnifying glass is used to count the threads in a fabric; woolens are boiled in chemical solutions to determine whether there is any adulteration; and cotton goods, such as sheets and pillow cases, are weighed, washed and weighed

again to ascertain to what extent they are loaded. For Macy's is just to itself, as well as to the public.

As has been indicated already, there are some things that the store as a matter of policy does not sell—pianos, chief of all. But that does not mean that there is, in the minds of its managers, the slightest excuse for its shelves not holding the things that it ought to sell. A large difference, this, and one which is constantly being checked by members of the shopping staff of the comparison department—going through its floors and inquiring in the various departments for goods for which there is little ordinary demand, and so a considerable likelihood of their not being found in stock. If an article requested is not found in stock, the shopper immediately buys something else—so as to get the number of the salesclerk. Then a report is made to the department buyer in order that he may see whether or not the clerk has followed up the inquiry.

Incidentally, the shopper's report upon this entire transaction takes into account all the details regarding the manner in which the sales are handled and even notes the speed with which the parcel is wrapped and the change returned. It is not a spying system, but part of the store's honest effort to keep its efficiency at the highest notch. Naturally the shoppers of its comparison department are not known as such to its salesforce—for this reason the personnel of the corps must be under constant change—and it is equally evident that their anonymity is carefully preserved in their dealings with other stores. They are all well-bred

young women, ranging in type from the flapper to the matron, and each is so carefully trained to act her part that it is quite impossible to distinguish them from the store's bona fide shoppers.

Another of their duties is to report upon the speed of Macy deliveries. Once a month, at a certain prearranged time of day, a similar purchase is made at each of the largest stores in the city, including Macy's. These are all ordered sent to the same address and a record is made of the length of time it takes each to arrive. In the report that is finally made of the test details are included showing the manner in which all the packages are wrapped in order that Macy service may at all times be held up at least to the standard of its competitors.

In the highly scientific machine of modern business, the test is as valuable as in other machines. I have stood in a great sugar refinery and watched the workmen from time to time draw off tiny phials of the sweetish fluid in order that they might show under laboratory examination that the machine was functioning at its highest point. And so are the tiny phials of Macy service drawn from the machine. If they show that, even in the slightest degree, the great machine of retail merchandising is functioning below its highest efficiency, it becomes the immediate business of the management to correct the loss.

"I tell my people not to come to me with reports that everything is going well," says its general manager, "I only want to know when things begin to slip. Then it is my job to set them straight once again."

One thing more, before we are quite done with this sketch of the organization of a great merchandising institution. It is, in this case, a most important thing:

With the credit system in force in nearly, if not quite, every other large store in the New York metropolitan district, Macy's for years has had to encounter a considerable sentiment against its policy of doing a cash business only. For there always has been a desirable class of trade represented by customers who, for one reason or another, find it most inconvenient to pay their bills monthly—people whose means and credit are unimpeachable. At one time it looked as if R. H. Macy & Company would either have to forego their custom or else make exceptions to their long established rule. The former they could do; the latter they would not. But—

Out of this very need for furnishing customers with the convenience of some sort of a charge account grew a great Macy specialty—the depositors' account department which, while making no concessions to the store's rock-ribbed principle of selling for cash, solved a very great problem in its touch with its public. It turned the costly credit privilege into an asset both for the customer and for the store. The very thought was revolutionary! What, ask a customer to pay in advance; to have money on deposit with R. H. Macy & Company, private bankers, to pay for normal purchases for a whole thirty days to come! It couldn't be done. New York would never, never stand for it. Every one outside of the store was sure that it never could be done. And a good many inside, as well. Yet the

thing deemed impossible has come to pass. The idea was sound. The plan today is successful, even beyond the dreams of its promoters. With fifteen thousand depositors, its total deposits—money placed into the store to be drawn against solely for merchandise purchases—have reached as high as $2,750,000 at a single time.

Interest at four per cent. annually is paid upon these deposits, so that the customer's money does not lie idle in the Macy till. Moreover, the money may be withdrawn at any time, and without previous notice being given. Further than this, it has been a custom—not, however, to be considered invariable—to pay a bonus of two per cent. on net sales charged to the depositors' account department throughout the year. Compare the thrill of receiving a bonus check from your department-store, instead of a bill for dead horses!

It has been estimated that in some of New York's most representative and most elegant department-stores something like eighty-five per cent. of all retail transactions are upon the credit accounts. Assuming even that all of these accounts are promptly collectible—or collectible at all—the expense of the machinery of their collection becomes no small item in store management cost. This item Macy's saves—entirely and completely. And so, to no small extent, the store justifies itself in that other rigid rule—the pricing of its merchandise at a uniform rating of six per cent. less than that of its competitors. Upon this thought, alone, a whole book might be written.

III. Buying to Sell

UP the broad valley of the Euphrates a caravan comes toiling upon its way. It is fearfully hot; frightfully dusty. For it has come to mid-September; the rains are long weeks gone; and with the crops harvested, even the sails of the great mills that pump the irrigation canals full are stilled. The time of great heat and of little work. But still the caravan—the long, attenuated file of horses and camels must press on.

Ahead is Bagdad, that self-same ancient Bagdad which three thousand years ago was the commercial capital of the world. Through the heat waves and the blinding dust, the trained eyes of the Moslem can see the sun touching the gilded minarets and towers of her great mosques. Bagdad ahead. And at Bagdad the market-places which have stood unchanged for tens of centuries. Save that in recent years there have come to them these Americans—these shrewd agents of a little known folk, these rug-buyers of a far-away land of which they spin such fascinating tales. Tales far too fascinating ever to be believable. Yet Allah keeps his own accounting.

In the foyer of a lovely new home in newest New York a Persian rug is being spread for the first time.

Its owner dilates with pride upon his purchase; shows those roundabout him the symbolism of its rarely delicate design; even to the tiny fault purposely woven into the creation by its maker to show in his humble fashion that only Allah may be faultless.

A great French city; this Lyons, by the bank of the lovely Rhone. For two centuries or even more its tireless looms have spun the rarest silk fabrics of the world. Nearby there is a little French village. Were I to put its name upon these pages, it would mean nothing to you. Yet out from it there comes a lace, so rare, so delicate, that one well may marvel at the human patience and the human ingenuity that conceived it. The silk comes to America, straight to the chief city of the Americas; so do the laces; and so in a short time will come once again the wondrous cotton weaves of Lille and of Cambrai—and will come as a tragic reminder of the five fearful years that were.

In the hot depths of a South African mine, negroes, stripped to their very waists, are toiling to bring forth the rarest precious stones that the world has ever known. In the fearfully cold blasts of the far North, facing monotonous glaring miles of lonely ice and snow, trappers are after the seal and the mink. Why? In order that milady, of New York, may sweep into her red-lined box at the Opera, a queen in dress, as well as in looks and in poise.

From the mine and from the ice-floes to her neck and back a mighty process has been undergone. The

great multiplex machine of merchandising has accomplished the process. A thousand other ones as well. Herald Square sits not alone between the East River and the North, between the Battery and the Harlem, between five populous boroughs of the great New York, not alone between the four million other folk who dwell within fifty miles of her ancient City Hall, but between the shoe factories of Lynn, the cotton mills of Lowell and of the Carolinas, the woolen factories of the Scots and the nearer ones of Lawrence, the paper mills of the Berkshires, the porcelain kilns of Pennsylvania, between a thousand other manufacturing industries, both very great and very small, as well. Into Herald Square—into the red-brick edifice upon the westerly side of Herald Square and reaching all the way on Broadway from Thirty-fourth to Thirty-fifth Streets—all of these pour a goodly portion of their products. In turn, these are poured by the big red-brick store into the pockets and the homes of its tens of thousands of patrons.

A mighty business this; and, as we shall presently see, a business made up of many little businesses. Merchandising, financing, transportation; each has played its own great part in the bringing of that silk sock upon your foot or the felt that you wear upon your head. Each has co-operated; each has correlated its effort. There are few accidents in modern business. Rule-o'-thumb has stepped out of its back-door. In its place have come cool calculation, steady planning, scientific investigation. If modern merchandising has tricks, these are they. And they are the tricks that win.

In our last chapter we pictured R. H. Macy & Company as a machine of salesmanship. Now I should like to change the film upon the screen. I should like to show you Macy's as a machine of buying. Obviously one cannot sell, without first buying. Buying must at all times precede selling, while to meet competition and still sell goods at a profit, the keenest sort of shrewd merchandising must be used in purchasing. Your buyer must be no less a salesman than he who stands behind the retail counters and, what is more to the point, he must constantly keep his finger upon the pulse of the market. Which means, in turn, that he must not for a day or an hour lose his touch with manufacturing and financial conditions—to say nothing of the changeable public taste.

For the one hundred and eighteen different departments of the Macy's of today there are now sixty-nine buyers; the majority of them women. This last is not surprising when one comes to consider that by far the larger percentage of the department-store's customers are of the gentler sex. Women know how to buy for women—or should know. How foolish indeed would be the merchant prince of the New York of this day who would not instantly say "yes" to the assertion that feminine taste in buying is the one thing with which his store absolutely could not dispense. So the woman buyer in our city stores is so much an accepted fact as to call today for little special comment, save possibly to add that in no store outside of Macy's has she come more completely into her own. The buyer's job covets her. And she covets the buyer's job. Well she

may. For it is a job well worth coveting—in independence, in opportunity and in salary.

In almost every case a buyer comes to the job from retail experience—although occasionally a knowledge of wholesale selling develops the required skill. In nine cases out of ten, however, he or she rises to the important little office on the seventh floor from the salesforce upon the retail floors beneath. From sales-clerk he—or as we have just learned, usually she—is promoted to "head of stock," which is the title of the head clerk in a department having three or four or more clerks. This promotion comes from a superior knowledge of the stock, yet not from that alone: the clerk must have executive ability. An agreeable temperament is also a necessary ingredient to the potion of promotion.

To the position of assistant buyer is the next and logical promotion for the ambitious and successful "head of stock." After this should come the step to the big job—which steadily grows bigger—of buyer, or as the Macy store prefers to call it, department manager.

Department managers do no actual selling. They now have graduated from that. Yet none the less are they salesmen—in more than a little truth, super-salesmen. For not only must they know what to buy—and how to buy it at the most favorable price—but they are equally responsible for knowing what to do with their purchases, once made. They are the merchants of the departments; accountable for the salability of their stock. It is very much their concern whether

those departments show a profit or a loss. Little stores within a big store. A big store made up of more than a hundred little stores.

As we have seen, it is not an uncommon custom for some department-stores to rent out or even to sell the privilege of many, if not all of its little stores. Macy's—in recent years at least—has not followed this policy. It has found that its own best organization comes from keeping the department as a unit; a pretty distinct and important unit, right up close to the very top of the business, where its three partners are specialists in merchandising; and passing proud of that.

The foundation of all successful buying is built of the bricks of sales knowledge laid in the mortar of good judgment. It is squared up by a sixth sense that has no name—yet a qualification which, by its presence or its absence, makes or unmakes a buyer's value. In its various branches, however, this unnamed sense is required, to a varying degree, perhaps, least of all in the purchasing of staple goods.

For the sake of a more convenient understanding, let us begin by classifying the various needs of the insatiable Macy's into three major divisions: We shall put down staples, as the first of these; luxuries, as the second; and novelties, as the third. Under staples we shall include notions, cotton goods (such as sheets, pillow-cases and muslins) and, in general, the absolute necessities of life, including wearing apparel of the commoner varieties, household articles and the like. These are in constant purchase almost every day of the

year. Take, for instance, that heterogeneous collection of articles, grouped under the generic and whimsical head of notions. There is thread of all kinds, there are hooks-and-eyes, snap-fasteners, hair-nets, darners, button-hooks, tape-measures and what all not more—far be it from me even to attempt to mention the more than four thousand separate items that must be constantly carried in the notion departments.

For all of these there is a huge daily demand, while a month's supply of any of them is all that can, as a rule, be conveniently handled in the store. It must be patent that, as there is never an equal demand for these small but essential articles, the buyers must be placing constant orders for them. So it is with everything else that people must have—irrespective of tastes, wealth or the season of the year—and the number of the list is legion.

Therefore, the buyer of staples does not depend so much upon the sixth sense as upon common sense. He must have plenty for the latter, however, and it is sure to be kept working on a fairly even basis throughout the entire year.

In the category of the luxuries are included such articles as jewelry, musical instruments, Oriental rugs, paintings, fine bric-a-brac and the like. Clearly the buyer in this branch must possess real taste and discrimination in addition to commercial ability, in order to be able to purvey these properly to the public. He handles goods which have to be bought by people who have already purchased the necessities of life—the buying of luxuries involves the spending of the public's

surplus and so this division of the work is at all times attended with great or less hazard.

But the real hazards, the real necessity for that sixth sense, which I just mentioned, the hardest and most nerve-racking buyer's job, comes in the purchase of those goods grouped under the common title of novelties. As one of the members of the Macy's merchandise council once observed, the departments devoted to staples sell what the people want, while those devoted to novelties make the people want what they have to sell. And this last is quite true of the luxuries, as well.

Here, incidentally, is a very curious fact about merchandise: A staple is not a constant thing. In one department it is what everybody wants and in another it becomes a novelty. For instance, a cotton pillow-case selling for, let us say, a dollar, is a staple; while another pillow-case, of linen this time, embroidered with an old English initial, hand hemstitched and edged with lace—we hesitate to guess at its cost—is a decided novelty, in the understanding of the store, at any rate. It also may be classed as a luxury.

Styles, fads, exclusive designs and seasons determine the work of the buyer of novelties. The job is one that requires quick decisions. The staple buyer can "play safe," but the buyer of novelties who pursued the policy soon would find himself in the rear of the procession. Nor can he afford to make mistakes, for they may be costly indeed to the house that he represents. There is, in consequence, a greater demand on his nerve, his ingenuity and his imagination than you

find in other classes of buyers. He must circulate where there are people—at the theaters, country clubs, restaurants, churches, in Fifth Avenue—and he must keep his ear to the ground and both eyes wide open. Consequently, when it is reported in the Sunday paper that the women of Paris have taken up the fad of wearing jeweled nose-rings, he must see that New York's women of fashion may have the same opportunity of expressing their individuality, by visiting Macy's jewelry department.

This, of course, is rank exaggeration, but it indicates what the novelty buyer aims at. And surprisingly often he hits the mark.

In such a huge establishment it is but natural that the reception hall outside the buying offices should be crowded most of the time. Mahomet oftimes goes to the mountain—or sends a representative to it to buy some of its goods—yet more often the mountain comes to Mahomet. And so, I am told, for five days a week—Saturdays being generally recognized as a closed day for buying—an average of from four hundred to six hundred and fifty salesmen a day visit the buying headquarters on the seventh floor of the store. Taking into consideration the fact that the goods purchased are paid for in cash within ten days of their delivery, these headquarters are most popular with the emissaries of manufacturers and wholesale houses. Added to this is the uniform policy of courtesy to salesmen, which has been stated by the company in its precise fashion:

"We have held, as far as within our power, the precept of which our late head, Isidor Straus, was a living personification—that business may be conducted between merchants who are gentlemen, in a manner profitable to both."

It is one thing to write a thing of this sort. It is another to live strictly up to it, day in and day out. But that Macy's does live up to this high-set principle of its behind-the-scenes conduct is evidenced by the unsought testimony of a manufacturer who sought for the first time to do business with it.

This man had made one of the mistakes into which all manufacturers are apt to fall, sooner or later. He had overproduced. And while, heretofore, his product had been chiefly, if not solely, sold in high-priced novelty shops he now needed an establishment of great turnover to help him out in his dilemma. Macy's came at once into his mind. The old house is indeed advertised by its loving friends. He went to it at once; by means of the special elevator, found his way, along with several hundred other salesmen, to the sample and buying rooms upon the seventh floor.

A young woman at the door received his card and, without delay, told him that he could see the buyer of the department which would naturally handle his product, upon the morrow; at any time before eleven, but under no circumstances later than noon. Better still, she would make a definite appointment for him for the next morning. Mr. Manufacturer chose this last course. And at the very moment of the appointed time was ushered into the buyer's little individual

room. Contact was established quickly. The buyer already knew of Mr. Manufacturer's line, regretted that they had not done business together a long time before. He inspected the proffered samples, quickly and with a shrewd and practiced eye; finally called into the little room two members of the salesforce from the department down upon the ground floor. They agreed with him as to the salability of the product. He turned toward the manufacturer.

"Please bring your stock to No. — Madison Avenue next Tuesday afternoon, at half-past two."

Why Madison Avenue? The manufacturer was perplexed as he descended to the street once again. The curiosity was relieved on Tuesday, however, when he and his abundant goods were ushered into a big and sunlit room.

"We shall not be subject to any interruption here," said Macy's buyer.

And so they were not. For two hours the buyer and two of his assistants went carefully over the stock, then withdrew for a short conference amongst themselves. When they returned they handed Mr. Manufacturer a card. It read after this fashion:

CASH
The entire lot
$_____

"The figure on that card, with the word 'cash' heavily underscored was just one hundred dollars in excess of my minimum," said the manufacturer afterwards, in discussing the incident. "I paused a moment and then said: 'Gentlemen, I mean to accept your offer. You have figured well, as your offer is just sufficient to buy the goods. R. H. Macy & Company have secured this merchandise of unusual quality and I congratulate you.' "

At the beginning of this chapter we mentioned another form of the store's buying—where Mahomet goes to the mountain. This, being translated into plain English, means that Macy's must and does maintain elaborate permanent office organizations in Paris, in London, in Belfast and in Berlin. These in turn are but centers for other shopping work—shopping that may lead, as we have already seen, as far as the distant Bagdad.

For instance, from his office in the Cité Paradis in Paris, the head of the French-buying organization of the store controls the purchase of all goods for it, not only in France, but in Belgium and Switzerland as well. He virtually combs these busy and ingenious manufacturing nations for their latest specialties; from France, *les derniers cris* in fashionable gowns, millinery, perfumes and novelties of every description; from Belgium, fine laces and gloves; and from Switzerland, watches. These items, however, are merely typical; there are hundreds of others.

A young American woman, of remarkable taste and

gifted with a genuine genius for buying, is upon the Paris staff and is engaged practically the entire year round in visiting exhibitions of every sort and variety, in hunting the retail shops, great and small, of the French capital and at all times acting upon her own initiative as a free-lance buyer. A job surely to be coveted by any ambitious young woman who feels that she understands and can translate the constantly changing tastes of her countrywomen into the merchandise needs of a store whose chief task is always to serve them.

For reasons that are not necessary to be set down here, the Berlin office of Macy's has been in *statu quo* for some years past, although it is just now reopening. The London branch is steadily on the search for the clothing, haberdashery and leather specialties which are the pride of the British workman, while from right across the Irish sea, at 13 Donegal Square, North, Belfast, come the fine Irish linens that so long have been a distinguished merchandise feature of the store's stock.

So it is, then, that forever and a day, Macy's is engaged in bringing the cream of European merchandise to New York—goods of nearly every kind that can either be made better abroad or cannot be duplicated at all in this country. Importing is indeed a large branch upon the Macy tree.

And in this branch romance oftimes dwelleth. The picture of the caravan toiling up the banks of the Euphrates is no idle dream at all. Upon the world maps of the merchandise executives of Macy's it is an outpost of trading as unsentimental as Lawrence, Massachusetts, or Norristown, Pennsylvania. Yet the

buyer who goes to the old Bagdad from the new has a real task set for him. Obviously he must not only have a knowledge of his market and a keen sense of values, but he must also be a resourceful traveler; a merchant who can adapt himself to the ways of the people with whom he trades. His judgment, discretion and integrity must be above reproach, for often he is far away and out of touch with headquarters for long months at a time.

Take such a buying trip as the Oriental rug-buyer of Macy's recently made into the Orient and back again. It lasted eight months. In that time he traveled more than thirty thousand miles—by steamship, motor-car, railroad, horseback and on foot. The rug region of Persia is a long way, indeed, from Broadway and Thirty-fourth Street and to reach it he went to London and Paris, then to Venice, where he took a steamer for Bombay, upon the west coast of India. Thence he proceeded by another steamer up the Persian Gulf to the city of Basra, which is at the confluence of those two ancient rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates—between which the earliest Biblical history is supposed to have been made. Basra today is one of the world's great rug-shipping centers.

Then he went to Bagdad itself—the fabled city of Haroun-el-Raschid and the Arabian Nights—from whence he started into the very heart of Persia. He was not content, however, to remain idly there and let the rugs be brought to him. He went much further. Through Kermanshah, the city whose name is given to the rugs which come from Kerman, seven hundred

miles to the southeast, to Hamadan, one of the main marketing-centers of the rug-producing country—that, briefly, was the beginning of his itinerary. He went carefully through Persia, picking up rugs here and there, having them baled and sent to Bagdad by mules or camels and shipped thence to New York; and he established warehouses to which rug-dealers brought their wares. The light of the Red Star shone in the East.

Roads in Persia leave much indeed to be desired, and as the chief means of travel, aside from beasts of burden, is by Ford cars, a buyer who covers much of its territory has a rather unenviable job. Gasoline in those parts costs four dollars a gallon, while if you hire a jitney you pay for it at the rate of a dollar a mile.

On his return trip to New York this buyer went back once again to India and north as far as the border of Afghanistan to investigate the condition of the rug market in that region. At ancient Siringar, in the Vale of Cashmere, he bought marvelous felt rugs made in the mysterious land of Thibet. And yet all the way throughout this long journey he was buying goods for only one department of the great store that he represented.

It used to be impressive to me when the hardware dealer of the small town in which I was reared would boast of the number of items that he held upon the shelves of his own center of merchandising. There were more than two thousand of them! He told me that with such an evident pride, as a Chicago man

speaks of the population of his town, or one from Los Angeles, of his climate. And yet such a stock as that wonderful one that was told to my youthful imagination, is more than duplicated in Macy's—and is but one of one hundred and seventeen others. And the responsibility of buying these millions of articles is scarcely less great than that of selling them.

IV. Displaying and Selling the Goods

WITH Macy's goods once purchased, the next problem becomes that of their transport to the store in Herald Square. Obviously their reception must rank second only to their purchase. And when this is accomplished, as we have just seen, in every corner of a far-flung world—Pennsylvania and Massachusetts and Thibet and Korea and South Africa, to say nothing of a thousand other places—their orderly receiving becomes, of itself, a mechanism of considerable size. Almost equally obvious it is, too, that the store, no matter how carefully and forevisionedly and scientifically its buyers may plan, cannot always dispose of its merchandise at precisely the same rate at which it comes underneath its roof. It cannot afford to gain a reputation for not carrying in stock the items either that it advertises for sale or that it has educated its patrons to expect upon its counters. Which means that alongside of and interwined with the orderly business of merchandise reception there must be warehousing—reservoir facilities, if you please.

In concrete form, these last of Macy's are not merely rooms upon the extreme upper floors on the main store in Herald Square—a space which in recent years, however, has shrunk to proportionately small dimensions

because of the vast growth of the business and the increasing demands of the selling departments upon the building—but four structures entirely outside of the parent plant: the Tivoli Building on the north side of Thirty-fifth Street, just west of Broadway (which, as we saw in the historical section of this book was originally the notorious music hall of the same name until Macy's purchased it for its merchandising plans), the Hussey Building, in the same street, but just west of the store, a third also in Thirty-fifth, but close to Seventh Avenue and a fourth in Twenty-eighth Street between Seventh and Eighth Avenues. So can a great store spread itself, even in its actual physical structure, far beyond the bounds that even the most imaginative of its customers might ordinarily call to mind.

It is in the rear of the selfsame red-brick building at the westerly edge of Herald Square—that same main structure that we have already begun to study in many of its fascinating details—that we find the core of the receiving department of the Macy store. It is a hollow core. A tunnel-like roadway, two hundred feet in length bores its way through the building, from Thirty-fifth Street to Thirty-fourth. Through this cavernous place, lighted at all hours by numerous electric arcs, there passes, the entire working-day, a seemingly endless procession of motor-trucks, wagons and other carriers. They enter at the north end and before they emerge at the south they have discharged their cargoes. A corps of men is kept constantly busy,

checking off the merchandise as it is unloaded. Husky porters, with hand trucks, seize cases, barrels and miscellaneous packages of every sort and, presto! they are whirled into huge freight elevators which presently depart for upper and unknown floors. There are three of these, in practically continuous operation. In addition to them packages brought by hand—generally from local wholesalers and in response to emergency orders—are carried up into the offices of the receiving department upon an endless carrier.

It is a source of wonder to the observer to see the way in which these men of Macy's work. The poise. The confidence. The system. It is terrifying even to think of the mess that would be the result of a day, or even an hour, of inexperience or carelessness. In fact, it would hardly take ten minutes so to jam that long receiving platform that straightening it out again would be a matter of days. But upon it every man knows just what to do; and every man does it, and does it fast. And system wins once again. It generally does win.

For these incoming goods receipts are made out in triplicate—one for the controller, one as a record for the receiving office and the third for the delivery agent; the second of these acts as a sort of herald of the actual arrival of the merchandise so that within sixty seconds or thereabouts of the actual appearance of the goods under the house's main roof the man who is responsible for them may be advised.

Every article purchased anywhere by R. H. Macy & Company, either for their own use or for resale, is

received through this department, although there are a few other points than the tunnel-like interior street from Thirty-fourth Street to Thirty-fifth where they are received. The four warehouses that we have just seen have their individual receiving facilities: the coal that goes to heat and light and drive the big main building is poured through chutes under the Thirty-fourth Street pavement, while direct to the company's stables and garages go the fodder for its vehicles—hay for the horses of flesh and blood, and gasoline and oil for those of steel and iron; all the other miniature mountains of their incidental materials into the bargain. But even these are checked in at the main receiving department; and triplicate receipts issued upon their arrival.

So, then, come in these goods—by hand, express, by parcel post and freight. The most of them have had their transport charges prepaid; a certain small proportion of them comes marked "collect." An especial provision must be made for the cash payment of these charges. The big machine of modern industry must indeed have many odd cams and levers adjusted to it. It must be designed not alone for the usual, but for the unusual, and in a multitude of ways.

These, then, are the reception chutes of the Macy machine; the porters, who even while hastening their trucks toward the elevators are making a cursory examination of the arrival condition of the merchandise, are in themselves small automatic arms of inspection. For while some of these packages have come from nearby

—perhaps not half a block distant—others will have come from halfway around the wide world. And the possibility of damage to the contents of the carrier is lurking always in the short-distance package, quite as much as in its brother, that has attained the distinction of being a globe-trotter. The crates from the Middle West, those stout and honest looking Yankee boxes from New England, this group of barrels from the heart of new Czecho-Slovakia, and that of zinc-lined cases from France—the *Lorraine* has touched at her North River pier but two or three days since—those great bales and bundles from the Orient, with the seemingly meaningless (and extremely meaningful) symbols splashed upon their rough sides, all look sturdy enough, as if they had survived well the vicissitudes of modern travel. Yet one can never tell.

Which means that the personnel of the order checking department up on the seventh floor must not only carefully verify the shipment as to quality and to price but as to the condition in which it actually is received. The hurried cursory examination of the platform porters becomes an unhurried and painstaking investigation in this last instance. The cases are not necessarily opened within the seventh floor headquarters of the order checking department. As in the case of the actual physical receipt, the unpacking is carried forward at the point of greatest convenience to the merchandise department to be served. But the results and records are kept at the one central headquarters.

And the skilled and expert merchandise checkers from the selfsame headquarters are the men and women

who oversee the unpacking—invariably. They pass the responsibility of their stamp and signature upon their receipts before the merchandise is turned over to the department manager, who himself, or through his responsibility, purchased it. Nothing is left to guess-work, or to chance.

Now we see the full responsibility settled once again upon the broad shoulders—let us hope indeed that they are broad—of the buyer. With a full knowledge of the price that he paid for them, of market conditions, and of the prices of Macy's competitors he determines the prices at which his merchandise is to be sold. Clerks, known as markers, quickly attach these prices by small tags to the goods themselves.

From the marking-rooms, where everything to be sold within this market-place is plainly and unequivocally priced, the merchandise goes without further delay either direct to the counters of the selling floors, or into the "reserves"—the warehouses that extend all the way from Twenty-eighth Street to north of Thirty-fifth, and from Broadway to Eighth Avenue. The stage is set. The show is ready. The performance may now begin.

A trip through the hinterland of the Macy store is like a visit behind the scenes of a modern theater. You see there just the way in which the drama of selling actually is staged, from the settings to the properties. You rub shoulders with the actors and actresses, just off stage; with the electrician, the stage-manager, the carpenter and the stage-hands. And always your ear

is waiting to hear outside the orchestra and the applause of the audience.

Into that ear there comes the almost rhythmic thud of automatic machines; a sort of continuous drone. You turn quickly and find beside you a row of ticket-printers, the little electric presses in which are made the price-tags that you find pinned or pasted or tied on every piece of Macy merchandise you buy. Miles of thin cardboard are fed into one side of these machines and come out the other; in proper-sized units, with the selling price of the article to be tagged plainly printed on them. Where the article is subject to Federal tax, this is also included as a separate item and the total given. One of these machines combines the operation of printing the price and attaching the ticket to the garment. It is detail—necessary detail, detail upon a vast scale.

Here, then, is the receiving department of this great single retailing machine of modern business. It keeps over three hundred human units constantly upon the move—and, mind you, all that these people are doing is merely making the merchandise ready to sell. The next step is the final one before actual sale; the display of proffered goods—upon the counters and within the plate-glass windows along the street frontages.

This, in the modern department-store, is considered a feature of the utmost importance, and nowhere more so than at Macy's. Sixty-four years of salesmanship experience, in the course of which it has been the orig-

inator of many daring and successful display experiments, has shown the house their full value.

Yet, even in Macy's, there are certain reservations to the strong house policy of attractive display. Certain fundamentals are stressed. The invitation to buy is forever put in the goods themselves rather than in the background against which they are shown. It requires no especial astuteness to see from this fact alone an enormous expense is saved; the benefit of which, according to the now well understood Macy plan, is passed on to buyer. Other stores spend many thousands of dollars in building and decorating special rooms and sections for merchandising which are far out of the ordinary. To give an air of extreme exclusiveness, *chic*, Parisian atmosphere—call it what you may—elaborate partitions are put up and expensive decorators given carte-blanche. The result is beautiful, almost invariably. Shopping in such surroundings becomes a peculiar delight—particularly to the woman patron. But milady pays. In the expressive, if not elegant, old phrase she "pays through the nose."

That some New York shoppers may like to pay this way is not for a moment to be doubted, but that the majority do, Macy's stoutly refuses to believe. While the house has not hesitated to install certain very lovely "special" rooms—*vide* the *salon* for the display of its imported frocks—the main thought in the construction of its present home in Herald Square was to build a retail market-place which would afford honest, efficient, comfortable marketing at the lowest possible prices. This meant that it would be inadvisable, to say

the least, to give the store the atmosphere of either a palace or a *boudoir*. This is a policy that has continued until this day.

None the less, Macy goods are displayed with the taste that makes them most desirable to the customer; psychological forethought, in a word. Novelties, of course, take precedence over staples—the articles that make the customer stop and investigate. Except under unusual conditions, the demand for staples does not have to be stimulated, and ordinarily no especial attempt is made to give them more than ordinary display. One underlying factor in the successful display of goods is to preserve harmonious color relations between them and, so far as possible, this harmony pervades the entire floor. The buying public would not tolerate a store where they heard profanity among the employees; and at Macy's they do not have to endure colors that swear at one another.

Held in high esteem by the public as well as by the store itself are the display windows which line the entire ground-floor frontage of the building on Broadway and on Thirty-fourth and Thirty-fifth Streets. Here merchandise is arranged by master window dressers under the general direction of the advertising department, for if the front windows of a house such as this are not advertising, what, then, is? Especially when the art of window dressing has come in recent years to be a finely developed art of its own. For many years before it left Fourteenth Street Macy's had a fame not merely nation-wide but fairly world-wide for its window displays—we already have referred to the won-

drous Christmas pageants that it formerly held as a part of them. In this it was again a pioneer, blazing a new commercial path for its competitors to follow.

Because window display is recognized as advertising, the ceaseless work of the master window dressers upon the outer rim of the Macy store comes under the direct supervision of the advertising department which in turn reports direct to no less an authority than the triple partnership itself. Publicity is the great right-arm of the super-store of the America of today. Publicity not in one channel, but in a thousand. Macy's not only helps to dominate the advertising pages of the newspapers of New York and a good many miles round about it, its red star not only gleams in Herald Square, but in these very recent days upon the high-set electric hoardings of Times Square that blaze forth far into the night; it finds its way into the public thought here and there and everywhere. And yet, with due appreciation of every other medium of publicity, the street window of the store still remains one of the most important phases of its appeal to possible patrons.

Its displays are scheduled long in advance; are devised as carefully as the decoration of a home might be, or, better still, as Urban or Pogany would plan the stage-settings of a scene in the Metropolitan or at any one of the various "Follies" that one finds just north of the Opera House. A large staff of men is kept constantly at work dressing the windows, and this staff includes the carpenters, paper-hangers, painters and electricians who are needed to help prepare the special exhibits. Under the floor of the window next the prin-

cipal entrance on Thirty-fourth Street there is a tank, which is used when a pool of water is required to carry out some scenic effect. It is capable of floating a canoe to suggest the joys of camping and the need of going to Macy's for one's vacation requisites—as well as for use in other capacities. Known in the store as the "parlor window" it has been made to represent pretty nearly everything from milady's bedroom to a glorified carpenter shop.

Window displays are regarded by Macy's as an important auxiliary to newspaper announcements. Very recently, during the few weeks before Christmas, a sale of overcoats was advertised. All the windows were then dressed with Christmas merchandise, but from one of them this was all removed and the sale overcoats substituted. For one day only. For upon the very next one the Christmas window was returned to its holly and mistletoe flavor.

Here is a pretty direct indication of the store's attitude towards its immensely valuable windows—if you do not consider them valuable inquire the price of the advertising signs in the Herald Square neighborhood. I asked its advertising manager if, in his opinion, the window space would not bring better returns if it were devoted to direct selling, instead of mere indirect selling through display. I had in the back of my mind some of the great Paris emporiums who think so little of window- and so much of selling-space that on bright warm days they spread some of their notions and novelty-counters right out upon the broad sidewalks of the Boulevards.

"No," said he, "decidedly no. To be able to show one's goods to the multitudes that pass these windows nearly every hour of the day is an asset that cannot be overestimated."

This is neither the time nor the place to go into the ethics or the fine principles of the most recently developed of American professions—advertising; the salesmanship of goods and of ideas not so much by the merchandise itself as by the representation of it. Neither is it the place to review the vast position that the modern department store has taken in the development of modern advertising of every sort: Newspapers, magazines, bill-boards, electric signs, other forms of display as well. There are folk who say that if it were not for the department-store advertising we should not have had the fully developed metropolitan newspaper of today; while, on the other hand, some of the larger merchants are not reluctant in saying that our modern metropolitan newspapers are the chief causes that have made the department-store as we know it in New York and other large cities of the United States possible. Be these things as they may, the fact does remain, however, solid and indisputable, that the co-operation between these two groups of interests has been more than profitable to their patrons, to say nothing of themselves. And not the least of the contributing causes to such profits is the fundamental honesty of the advertisements.

Not so very many years ago the measure of integrity in advertising was, to speak charitably, a variable one.

When they talked about them in print merchants were very likely to become overenthusiastic about their goods. Modesty was flung to the four winds. Printers' ink seemed to be taken as an automatic absolution for exaggeration—and oftimes absolute misstatement—and, strangely enough, the public appeared to fall in with the idea. More often than not the merchant "got away with it"—or, if not, made good with bad grace, in which case the customer was satisfied. He had to be.

But not so with Macy's. Early in its history an advertising policy was formulated that has endured to the present and will continue to endure. It is the house's stoutly expressed belief that there is no possible excuse whatsoever for misrepresentation and, following this out, it is its invariable rule to stand back of its advertising, to the last ditch. To this end it has inculcated such a spirit of conservatism into its advertising department that the superlative is eliminated and forbidden in describing Macy goods. "We may think that these articles are the best, or the most beautiful, or the greatest bargain, but we can't absolutely be sure of it." That is its attitude. The only possible criticism is the same that one applies to the man who stands so straight that he leans backward.

Is the system flawless? Of course not—no system is. Not many weeks ago an incident occurred that shows how Macy's may slip up—and then make good; it put out a small newspaper advertisement featuring coats for small boys at $8.74. These were advertised as "wool chinchilla" and so potent was the appeal of

the notice that by ten o'clock the entire stock of nine hundred coats was gone. Then one of the store executives discovered that the coats were not *all wool* and things began to hum.

"Never said that they were all wool," the responsible sub-executive cornered. "People ought to know that they can't buy an all-wool coat for that money."

That made no difference with the big boss. Patiently and firmly he explained that in a Macy advertisement "wool" means "all-wool" except where it is clearly specified that it contains cotton. Another advertisement was inserted in the newspapers the following day. It explained and apologized for the misstatement and said, "We would deem it a favor if our customers would bring in these coats and accept a return of their money." Out of the nine hundred coats sold one was brought back for credit, while another was brought in by a customer who wanted to keep the coat but thought that she might get a rebate. She didn't. Macy's may lean over backward but it doesn't drag on the ground—an instance of which is contained in the following:

Christmas candy for Sunday Schools was advertised in a number of New York newspapers at the very low price of $7.44 for one hundred pounds. In one newspaper three pieces of type fell out of the form with the result that the advertisement went to press quoting a hundred-weight of candy at forty-four cents! It was patent that it was a typographical error, for the decimal point, as well as the dollar mark and the figure 7 was gone and there was a blank space where the

types were missing. Three would-be customers tried, however, to hold the store accountable for the very obvious error. And Macy's balked!

The lowest-in-the-city-prices policy keeps the advertising department on its toes continually. Other stores' prices must be anticipated wherever it is humanly possible, which means constant revisions of the copy. Occasionally a price duel develops that becomes spectacular in the extreme. In a recent memorable one "hard water soap" figured as the *casus belli*. Macy patrons know their right now to expect lowest prices, so when another store began to cut Macy's advertised prices on this commodity, Macy's had to return in suite. Whereupon the other store cut under Macy's again; and Macy's in turn went its competitor one better. It then became a merry game of parry and thrust until, one fine day, Macy's was selling twelve dozen cakes of hard water soap for the inconsiderable sum of one copper cent. One came near godliness for a small amount that day. The public profited hugely, but Macy's lived up to its policy.

As a rule advertisements originate with the department managers. Keeping in mind that they are the buyers, the merchants responsible for the moving of their stock, it can be seen that they know best the goods that ought to be featured. The value of the space used is charged against their departments, so that their requisitions are governed accordingly. The advertising manager is a large factor, however, in the allotment of space—not only the clearing-house, but

practically the court of last resort—concerning the rival claims by the department manager for space upon a given day. After all, there is a limit to the size of a newspaper page.

When a certain line of goods is about to be advertised, the comparison department is notified and the articles are "shopped." That is, one or more of the expert shopping staff is given the task of ascertaining what other stores are charging for the same things so that it may be made sure that the Macy price will be lower. The information then is passed on to the copy writing staff and samples of the goods are studied for selling points. While the description is being written, one of the art staff makes a drawing, either in the nature of a design or illustration, and when these are completed the advertisement is set in type. This, bear in mind, is only for one item. Macy advertisements, more often than not, cover an entire newspaper page and are made up of many separate items, each of which goes through practically the same process of creation. Their final collection and arrangement on the page are made by an advertising expert of skill and taste and from this fact, combined with the distinctive type faces that are commonly used, one might be reasonably sure of identifying a Macy advertisement even if the store name were to be entirely omitted.

In addition to window display, newspaper and magazine announcements, it is the concern of the advertising department to provide the store with its sign cards and special-price tickets. These are all a part of the big problem of letting the public know about Macy goods.

Yet above and beyond all of these things, the store's supreme advertisement, if you please, is the establishment itself, the service that it strives so sincerely to give. To use the current phrase of expert publicity men, the store, its salespeople and its prices must *sell* Macy's to the outside world. Outside advertising is but supplementary to this; but a single horse in a team of four.

With this fact firmly fixed in your mind, consider next the unbending problem of making the salesforce into a genuine salesforce; one that constantly and continually backs up the force of the printed advertisement by the skill of its real salesmanship. When we come in another chapter to consider the Macy family as a whole we shall see in some detail its remarkable educational and training opportunities. These have been brought to bear directly upon the creation, not only of thoroughness and accuracy on the part of the clerk, but for courtesy and persuasiveness and enthusiasm as well—the things that make the structure of morale; that quality that we first began to know and to understand as such in the days of the Great War.

"If you are playing a game, such as tennis, or bridge, or baseball or what-not," said one of the department managers to his sales staff but a few mornings ago, "you are out to beat your best friend; if you can, do it fairly and squarely, otherwise never. The enjoyment you derive from a game depends on the spirit with which you play it. When you begin to regard business in a similar light, playing it as a game in a sportsman-

like manner, then you will begin to get fun out of it—you will begin to make progress."

After the preliminary training which every salesclerk receives, he or she is assigned to a department. Thenceforward a good deal depends on personal initiative; for in dealing with customers no small part of the store's reputation for efficiency and courtesy depends upon the individual clerk. A salesperson may become not only a distinct asset to the house, but may develop a personal clientele through especially intelligent and courteous attention to the customers' wishes. And this, owing to the system of allowing a bonus on sales above a certain fixed quota, and a commission on sales up to that quota, may make it financially very much worth while to him or her.

Salesmanship in a store as large as Macy's must of necessity include the knowledge of considerable detail in the making out of sales slips, procedure with regard to C. O. D. deliveries, depositors' accounts, exchanges and the like. This knowledge is a fundamental part of each salesperson's equipment. His or her efficiency must come, however, from a far wider development of the possibilities of the salesmanship, from the "playing of the game," as the department manager put it but a moment ago—the understanding use of courtesy, merchandise knowledge, helpfulness. Such efficiency pays. The Macy folk who come to use it regularly soon find themselves advancing to responsible and highly-paid positions.

It is interesting to follow the career of a sales slip

from the time it is made out—when the sale is made—until the time that it ceases to function. Here is one of the most important items in the mechanism of a large retail store. It is an essential unit of a carefully developed system to keep track of sales, from the minute that they are made until they are finally delivered and audited.

The sales slip—the Macy clerk has three different ones of them in all—is made in three distinct parts—original, duplicate and triplicate. Each of these is divided into several parts; each of which in turn is destined for separate hands. The packer of the merchandise gets one part, which eventually goes to the customer, a second to the cashier, the third the clerk retains. Eventually these last two come together once again in the auditing department and are checked, the one against the other; after which one goes into the archives of the bureau of investigation, in case that there is any further question about the details of the transaction. This one example of the infinite detail in the conduct of a great store is a slight indication of the responsibility upon the shoulders of not only its managers but the rank and file of its salesforce as well. A single error in the making out of a sales slip may easily result in expensive and harassing complications all the way along the line.

A system of transfer books enables the store's customer to make purchases in its various departments with the least possible waiting. The goods and prices are entered in a small book which is given the customer at the time of the first purchase of the day. While

the customer is making his or her other purchases they are being sent to the wrapping room where they are held in a growing group until the customer presents the book to the cashier at the transfer desk on the main floor, pays the total and, a few minutes later, receives a neat package in which all of the items are wrapped together; or else it is sent to any designated address.

Enough, for the moment, of detail. Some of it is necessary to a proper understanding of the workings of this great machine of modern business, but too much of it may easily bore you. Instead, quickly turn your attention to a Macy feature dear to the heart of the average shopper—male or deadlier. Here is the familiar, the time-honored "special sale." In holding these Macy does not lay claim to originality, except perhaps in the amount of merchandising involved and the spectacularly low prices. Sales are in a large measure opportunities for the store as well as for the customer. It takes a goodly amount of merchandise from a manufacturer who for some reason offers a large concession in price and passes on its advantage to its customers. This is not generosity. It is good business. It is sound business. It is progressive business.

Take a sale of laundry soap that went on within the great store about a year ago. The soap was made in this country and contracted for by the city of Paris, upon a dollar basis. Exchange slumped, and with francs worth only a fraction of their former value, Paris couldn't afford to take it. Macy's offer for it

was accepted and so marked was the reduction at which it was offered to the public that inside of two weeks the big store had sold twenty-two carloads of it. Figuring from the fact that a carload comprised six hundred cases, the turnover amounted to 6,862 cases; or, counting a hundred bars to a case, 686,200 pieces of soap!

The most successful sale of winter underwear that Macy's ever held took place during a very warm week in July, a twelvemonth before the laundry soap episode. A large manufacturer wanted to unload his stock and Macy's bought it for cash. Add to these facts the consideration that the goods were away out of season and you can readily see how it was possible to buy the goods at a very low price. Relying upon the public's ability to judge values, in and out of season, the store launched the sale—and launched it successfully. It was like a scene out of *Alice in Wonderland* to see the crowds of men and women with perspiration rolling down their foreheads buying woolen "undies" against the needs of winter. Americans do like to be forehanded.

Macy's ability to buy and sell huge quantities of merchandise is demonstrated through these sales. Very recently over seven thousand of a particular leather traveling bag were sold in less than four weeks, at an aggregate price of nearly $75,000. In one day seven hundred vacuum cleaners were sold for $29.75 each. This list might be continued indefinitely; for not only has Macy's proved that it pays to advertise but that it pays to follow the Macy advertisements.

Down in the basement of this great mart of Herald Square there is a corner not often shown to the outer world, from which there constantly emerge noises which blend and combine to give the effect of a staccato rumble. Thud, thud, t-h-u-u-d, thud, thudity, thud, thud. Then a sound of air, as in a Gargantuan sigh. Thudity, thud, and so on, *ad infinitum*. These sounds seemingly are quite unending. If your curiosity draws you toward the door from which these sounds emerge and you finally are premitted to open it and go within, you will find a company of young women sitting along both sides of three sets of moving belts, quickly picking brass cylinders from the belts as they pass them. Except for the fact that there is another tube room on the fourth floor (for the upper floor selling departments) this basement place might truly be called the heart of the store, for it is these brass cylinders that contain the life-blood of the business, the cash which the customers pay for their purchases. Call the tube room the pulse of the store and the analogy is better—certainly their throbbing is a close index of its condition.

Alert cashiers pick up the carriers from the upper belt as they pass, deftly make the required change, and drop them to the lower belt, on which they are conveyed to other young women who despatch them to the departments whence they came. This continues for approximately eight hours each working day. The cash carriers do considerable traveling in the course of a year. One of them might easily go from the new Bagdad to the old. Yes, it might. If you still scoff

let us look at the system together and do a little figuring upon our own account.

Throughout the store there are two hundred and fifty cash stations—the outer terminals of the line at one of whose common hearts we now stand. Each of these stations is connected with one or the other of the common hearts by two separate lines of tubing, one for sending and the other for receiving the carriers. There is a total of 125,000 feet of this tubing, or nearly twenty-four miles. Five thousand cash carriers are in use and the average number of round-trips made per day by all of them is 150,000. Each round-trip averages two hundred and fifty feet. The average distance traveled each day by this host of travelers then comes to the astonishing total of 37,500,000 feet—7,155 miles. Now to your atlases and find how far the new Bagdad is from the old. And if that distance does not give you pause, consider that the peak-load of the system was carried on a day when its mileage ran to 12,120—an equivalent of one-half the distance around the world—in a little over eight hours.

Truly it would seem that money goes far at Macy's.

V. Distributing the Goods

WHEN milady of Manhattan finishes her purchases in Macy's, snaps her purse together once again and goes out of the store, the transaction is ended, at least as far as she herself is concerned. But not so for Macy's. Particularly not so when she has given orders that the goods be "sent," either to her own home or to the home of some friend. In such cases the largest part of the store's responsibility still is ahead of it. It must see to it that the package—or packages—shall be carried to the proper destination, quickly, promptly, correctly. Which means that the great business machine of Herald Square has another great function to perform.

There is, in the sub-basement of the Herald Square store, where the greatest portion of its own great transportation system is situated, an ancient two-wheeled cart, somewhat faded and battered, yet still a red delivery wagon and showing clearly the name of the house it served, R. H. Macy & Company. It is a treasured relic of other days, which now and then again, at great intervals, is shown to the populace in the all-too-rare parades of the huge wagon equipment of the store today.

The gentleman who gives the lecture which accom-

panies any public showing of this ancient equipage is Mr. James Woods, who, as we have already seen, has been with the store for nearly half a century and who has risen in its service to the important post of assistant superintendent of the delivery department. Mr. Woods regards the cart with tender affection, since it was he who once was the human horse who strode between its shafts. That was back in 1873, long years before the store had moved north from the once tree-shaded Fourteenth Street. Mr. Macy, himself, was still very much in charge of the enterprise and was passing proud of his delivery "fleet"—consisting of three horse-drawn wagons, and young Jimmie Woods with the cart. A good many prosperous New Yorkers then had their residences within a dozen blocks or less of the old store, and young Jimmie's legs—and the cart—could and did serve them, easily and expeditiously.

That was almost the beginning of the Macy delivery department. In fact it had been but five years before that Mr. Macy had acquired the first horse-drawn rig for this purpose. From that beginning the growth was steady although slow. Ten years after Mr. Woods first came to it—in 1883—there were but fifteen wagons. In 1902, when the great trek was made north to Herald Square, there were a hundred. Today there are more than two hundred and fifty, of which by far the larger number are motor driven. These last range all the way from the big five-ton motor trucks which, as we shall presently see, are used primarily for carrying merchandise between the store and its outlying

distributing stations, down to the small one-ton truck, which is used at its greatest advantage in city street distribution. And an astonishing number of horse-drawn vehicles remain. That is, astonishing to the uninitiated layman, who perhaps has been led to believe that the motor truck in this, its heyday of perfection, could hardly be surpassed for any form of carrying. As a matter of fact, however, the department-stores as well as the express companies, skilled in the multiple distribution of small packages, have, after a careful and intensive study of the motor trucks—which has resulted in their ordering many, many hundreds of them for certain of their necessities—discovered that for certain forms of delivery the horse and wagon still remains unsurpassed. The time that a delivery wagon remains standing becomes an economic factor in its use. If it moved all the time it undoubtedly would be as cheap and certainly more efficient to use a small automobile truck. But when there are fairly lengthy stops and close together, where perhaps the vehicle is idle for four minutes for every one that it is actually in operation, the factor of having an expensive machine idle as against an inexpensive one comes into play.

Business organizations reckon these things not alone from sentiment, but from hard-headed facts. Yet they are not entirely free from sentiment, even in such seemingly purely commercial matters as delivery. The very condition and upkeep of the vehicles of a high-grade department-store show this. "Spic-and-span" is hardly the phrase by which to describe them. Fresh paint and gold striping—the smooth sides so cleaned

and polished, that one might see his face reflected mirror-like upon them, the horses to the last state of perfection—this is the Macy standard of delivery. A Macy truck and wagon is designed to be one of the store's best advertisements.

A skillful trucking contractor from the lower west side of New York went to a department-store owner a dozen years or more ago and said:

"Mr. A——, after a little study of your delivery service, I am convinced that if you would turn it over to me, I could save you more than fifty per cent. in its operation."

Mr. A—— was a pretty hard-headed business man, "hard-boiled" is the word that might well be used to describe him. He turned quickly to the contractor.

"You interest me," said he. "How would you propose to do it?"

"At the outset, by making the wagon equipment a little less elaborate. It could be just as efficient without so much varnish and brass and gold-stripe."

Mr. A—— shook his head negatively.

"Oh, no," he said, "we know that much ourselves. If we were to do that, we should lose fifty per cent. of our advertisement upon the streets of New York."

We have left milady's package where she left it, in the hands of the salesclerk who sold it to her. The purchaser does not see it thereafter, not at least until it has come to her home. With an astonishing celerity and according to a carefully set-down program and practice it is wrapped right within the floor upon which

the selling department is situated, and then dropped into a chute which leads with a straight, swift run into that nether world of Macy's—the basement headquarters of the delivery department. In reality this chute is a carrier, so designed as to carry the small individual packages with safety and order, as well as with celerity.

There are fourteen of these conveyors, coming down from all the selling floors save that of furniture which has its own special delivery organization on the ninth floor. Together they pour their almost constant stream of merchandise upon the so-called "revolving-ring" in the very center of the basement floor. This "revolving-ring," in purpose very much like the great and slowly revolving disc-like wooden wheels used in the freight stations of the express companies for a similar service, is, in reality, much larger than they. It is a "square-ring"—if I may use that paradoxical phrase—built of four slowly moving conveyor belts upon which a package may travel an indefinite number of round-trips. At various points upon the outer edge of this moving square the conveyor chutes drop their merchandise. Near the center are the wide-open mouths of other conveyors, which lead to distant corners of the basement.

The nimble-fingered and nimble-witted young men who stand within the "revolving-ring" feed the packages from it into these last conveyors. To each individual package is affixed a duplicate portion of the leaf of the salesbook. On it the salesclerk has written, or printed, the address to which the merchandise is to go, the cost, whether or not it is collect on delivery

(known hereafter in this telling as C. O. D.) and other essential information. It is the addresses, however, which attract the eyes of the genii of the "revolving-ring." In their minds these fall into four great categories: City, meaning those portions of Manhattan Island south of Seventy-second Street on the east side and Ninety-ninth Street on the west; Harlem and the Bronx, the incorporated city of New York north of those two streets; Brooklyn and New Jersey—self-explanatory; and Suburban: all the rest of the territory within the far-flung limits of Macy's own generously wide delivery service. While for those points that are unfortunate enough to lie just outside of it—Boston or Philadelphia or Kamchatka or Manila (There hardly is an address to stagger the Macy delivery department)—the packages go direct to the shipping room, in its own corner of the basement.

Here these last are checked and wrapped for long-distance shipment. They are checked against the payment or the non-payment of transportation charges; the store has very definite rules of its own. A paid purchase of but $2.50 is entitled to free delivery within any of the Eastern States, of $5 and over to any of the Middle States as well, of $10 and over to any corner of the whole United States. Freight and express prepayments are arranged upon a somewhat similar basis. The majority of the long-distance shipments go by parcel post, however. Still, in the course of a twelvemonth, there are enough to go both by express and freight to make a pretty considerable transportation bill in themselves.

Again we have neglected that precious package of milady's. It may be only an extra pair of corset-laces—in which case the saleswoman must have suggested that madam herself transport it to her habitat—or it may be an eight or ten-yard piece of heavy silk for her new evening gown, or the evening gown itself. In any case it receives the same care and attention. We have already seen how it is packed, sent through the conveyor-chute down into the basement and then upon the "revolving-ring" before the nimble eyes of the men with nimble hands and wits as well.

Milady lives in West One Hundred and Fourth Street. The sorter's eyes catch that much from the address slip, torn originally from the salesclerk's book and pasted upon the package's outer wrappings. "Harlem" his mind reports back to his eyes. Into the chute-entrance labeled "Harlem and The Bronx" goes the package.

"Harlem and The Bronx" is a sizable room for itself. The further end of the second conveyor to receive milady's precious package rests upon a table in its very center. Roundabout the table are small compartments or bins, each about the size of a small packing case; each numbered and corresponding to a definite wagon route or run. Run No. 87 (the number is purely fictitious) takes in West One Hundred and Fourth Street. Into compartment No. 87 goes milady's packages. But not, of course, until the clerical young man technically known as the sheet-writer has made a record of it. Into his records, also, go all the other packages destined that day for that particular room.

If there should be, as sometimes happens, an overplus of packages for the single run, then it is the business of one of the assistant superintendents of delivery to meet the emergency either by stretching momentarily the runs of the adjoining routes or by sending a special wagon up from the main store. Experience and judgment must cut the cloth to fit the case.

Under any ordinary procedure milady's package will go out early in the morning of the day following her purchase. That, at least, is the store's ordinary guarantee of delivery. As a matter of fact, it does far better than this. On ordinary days, when weather and street conditions in Manhattan have not gone in conditions of near-impassability, there are at least two regular deliveries to every part of the island south of One Hundred and Fifty-fifth Street, with a single one at least to every other part of Manhattan, Brooklyn and the Bronx, to say nothing of the downtown portions of Jersey City and Hoboken. Easily said, this thing. But when one comes to realize how tremendously widespread the metropolitan district of Greater New York is these days, the performance of it becomes a transportation marvel, a masterpiece of organization.

I shall not bore you with a description of the printed forms, the checks and counter checks that accompany the delivery of milady's package. It is enough to say that they are both complete and necessary. The complications of C. O. D. add greatly to their perplexities. For, discourage it as they may and do, the department-store owners of New York never have been able to wean milady from the joys of this method of

shopping. When she says "C. O. D." in Macy's the salesclerk immediately and courteously replies: "Have you tried having a depositor's account, madam?" A good many of them have, and all who have have liked the method. Yet the C. O. D. still has its great appeal. And out of all the deliveries from the big store in Herald Square more than half of them are collect-on-delivery. This means, in turn, a good deal of complication for the delivery department. Its drivers have to be cashiers, in miniature. When they report at the main store at half-past seven in the morning, each is furnished with five dollars in change; a sum which is doubled in the case of the suburban drivers. Moreover, for the correct handling of the forms, a double amount of care and understanding is required. One does not wonder that the department-store proprietors discourage the C. O. D.

Yet it all requires a high type of wagon representative. Hardly less than the salesclerk does the wagon driver of the store have it in his power to make or lose friends for his house. His is no small opportunity for real salesmanship. The big stores realize this, and select these men with great care and discernment. They know that the man who shouts "Macy's" up the areaway or elevator-shaft once or twice a week is apt to become the same sort of good family friend and ally as the iceman or the butcher's boy. The man knows that, too: particularly in the vicinity of Christmas week. His own trials are many and varied. Apartment house superintendents and janitors, with prejudices of their own, are rarely co-operative, generally obstructive, in

fact. Some people—even store patrons—are naturally mean. They take out all their meanness upon the department-store man who, because of his very position, is unable to strike back.

Yet the job has its compensations, aside from the warm remembrances of the holiday season. People, in the main, are decent after all. If Mrs. Jinks, who lives in Albemarle Road, Flatbush, is out at the matinee or the movies for the afternoon, Mrs. Blinks, who lives next door, will take in her packages. The Macy man has been long enough on the route to know that by this time. Such knowledge is a part of his stock in trade. He must not only know the regular patrons of the store, but all of their neighbors. While by the correct and courteous handling of both he may not only retain trade for it but bring new customers to its doors.

Let us now suppose that milady does not live in either Manhattan, Brooklyn or the Bronx, but in one of those smart suburbs: Forest Hills, New Rochelle, Englewood or the Oranges, to pick four or five out of many. She still is well within the limits of Macy's own delivery service. If she lives in the first of these—Forest Hills—she will be served, not direct from the Herald Square establishment, but from the little Long Island community of Queens. Fifteen wagon and motor truck routes run from the Macy sub-station there, which in turn is fed by the merchandise coming out over the great Queensborough bridge, each evening, on heavy five-ton trucks. And, to go back even further, these have been filled from the super-

sized compartments at the end of the conveyor-chute marked "Suburban."

Similarly, if she dwell in New Rochelle, she will be served by one of the fifteen motor trucks running out from the sub-station at Woodlawn, remembered by travelers upon the trains to Boston chiefly as the place of the enormous cemetery. It serves the great suburban territory north of the direct delivery routes out from the main store—a line drawn through Kingsbridge and Pelham Avenue—out as far as Ossining, Mt. Kisco and Stamford.

Englewood and the New Jersey territory roundabout are served by Macy's Hackensack sub-station, with nine more routes; while the Oranges, mighty Newark, Montclair and that immediate vicinage draws its merchandise through a fourth sub-station, right in the heart of Newark, itself, and operating ten regular motor truck routes. The fifth and last all-the-year sub-station is at West New Brighton, Staten Island. It serves that far-flung and least populated of New York's five boroughs, Richmond.

In the summer months another sub-station is added to the list, at Seabright, down on the New Jersey coast, and serving all those populous resorts from the Atlantic Highlands on the north to Spring Lake on the south. This is an expensive feature of Macy service, and one for which the store receives no extra compensation. It is one of the many expensive things that must be charged to profit-and-loss or the somewhat indefinite "*overhead*"—indefinite enough when one comes to consider its ramifications, but always fairly definite in its

drain upon the daily financial balances of the store.

At each of these sub-stations there are, in addition to the fairly obvious necessary facilities for re-sorting the merchandise, complete garage facilities for the wagons and trucks running out from them; these, of course, are in addition to the store's main stables and garages in West Nineteenth Street and also in West Thirty-eighth, Manhattan. Together all of these form a very considerable fleet upon wheels, with a personnel in keeping. For the delivery routes alone, and taking no account of the sizable force employed in the upkeep of vehicles and horses, there are employed, in the city service of the store, one hundred and ninety drivers and chauffeurs, with one hundred and eighty-six helpers, and in the suburban service, seventy-four drivers and eighty-six helpers.

Through the hands of these there pours a constant and a terrific stream of merchandise. The conveying system in the basement of the Herald Square store has a generous maximum carrying capacity of five thousand packages an hour—a capacity which sometimes is actually reached toward the close of an exceptionally busy day, say toward the end of the pre-Christmas season. Twenty-five thousand packages is an average day's work for that basement room; upon occasion it has gone well over forty-one thousand. It should be borne in mind, moreover, that a package does not always represent a single purchase; in fact, it rarely does. Inside of one assembled package—generally assembled, as we saw in a previous chapter, at the store's transfer desk—there may be all the way from two to

ten separate parcels. You may take your own guess as to the average number.

Here, then, is the great and complicated system in its simplest form. Its ramifications are many and astonishing. For instance, milady is apt at times to change her mind. Yes, she is. And send the package back. Even though not as often in Macy's as in the charge account stores. Here is another decided benefit in the cash system—not alone to the store, but, because of its habit of passing on its economies, to its patrons as well. Yet in the course of a year a considerable number of packages must come back. Despite a thorough educational system and constant oversight and admonition there is bound to be a percentage of incorrect address slips. These and other causes produce a certain definite return flow of merchandise; which must have its own forms and safeguards, for the protection both of the store and its customer. They all make detail, but extremely necessary detail.

In the basement there is a store room whose broad shelves hold a variety of merchandise, bought and paid for, but never delivered. The store makes at least two attempts to deliver every article given to its delivery department. That department is unusually clever with telephone books, club lists and other less used avenues of finding recalcitrant addresses. But there come times when even its resourcefulness is entirely baffled. Then the undelivered goods must go to the store room until some properly accredited human being comes up somewhere, sometime to demand them.

In an astonishing number of cases the some one does not come up sometime or somewhere. In such a case after a fair length of time the goods themselves go back to stock. But the record of the transaction stays accessible in the store's files, so that its bureau of investigation, at any future time, may order a duplicate of the lost shipment out of the stock—out of the open market if the stock then fails to hold it—in order that Macy's may keep full faith with its patrons.

Such a holdover is, of course, to be entirely distinguished from those which are held in advance of delivery; in certain cases up to thirty days without advance payment, in others up to sixty upon partial payment and in still others up to six months after full payment. This last, however, is a merchandising procedure quite common to most retail establishments.

One feature of the delivery department remains for our consideration; the branch of it which is situated upon the ninth floor and which, oddly enough, handles the heaviest merchandise shipped out of the store—furniture. There are, of course, heavy shipments that go out of the basements—hundreds of them on an average that are entirely too heavy for the conveyor-chutes and the "revolving-ring." A notable one of these is an electric washing-machine, which, crated, will weigh slightly in excess of two hundred pounds. Shipments such as these go to the basement on hand trucks and by the freight elevators. There they are boxed and crated; often a considerable job. As a rule the expert packers of the delivery department can put

even a fairly sizable or unwieldy purchase into boxing within twelve or fifteen minutes; an elaborate and fragile bit of statuary has been known to take a full hour and a half before it was safely prepared for wagon shipment.

Likewise the furniture craters upon the ninth floor oftimes find their job a sizable one indeed. The boxing of a divan or a dining-room table is no easy task whatsoever. And in cases where the delivery is to be made within the limits of Macy service it is often avoided entirely. The freight elevators of the store are of the largest size ever designed; so big that a heavy motor truck is no particular strain upon their individual capacity. One of these trucks can be and is driven straight to and from the ninth floor. After it has reached the department the placing of fine furniture in its cavernous interior is merely a nicety of planning and arrangement, a skillful use of ropes and blankets and padding. The truck may run to any point within forty or fifty miles of the store at less cost than crating; even though crating be done at cost, itself.

So spread the tentacles of Macy's, those long arms of distribution that keep the store from ever being a merely abstract thing. The bright red and yellow wagons and trucks—each bearing its good-luck symbol of the red star—carry Herald Square to the far limits of a far-flung city. The men who ride them are upon the outposts of salesmanship. Yet through system and through organization they are forever closely connected with it. The blood that courses through your

finger-tips comes straight from your heart. The life-blood of understanding, of enthusiasm, of morale, that Macy's outriders bring with them is the life-blood of the humanized machine that functions so steadily there in the heart of Manhattan.

VI. The Macy Family

IN the bazaars of ancient Bagdad, the human factor was not only the great but the sole dominating influence. The ancient Bagdadians, including those commuters and suburbanites, far and near, who came cameling into town at more or less frequent intervals, did business, not with a machine, not with a system, but with men. Which, being freely translated, meant bargaining. They not merely bargained, but haggled, and haggled at great length. Prices? There were none. The price was what you made it—you and the merchant with whom you finally came to agreement; if finally you did come to agreement.

In the great bazaars of the modern Bagdad one does not need to bargain or to haggle. One is doing business primarily with a system. Prices are fixed, and firmly fixed. This is so generally understood and accepted a rule today that it would be a mere waste of time to discuss it at further length, save possibly to recall once again the large part which Rowland Hussey Macy and the men who followed him played in giving a Gibraltar-like firmness to this solid modern business principle.

Yet even in these same modern, scientifically organized bazaars of today, the system rarely ever can be

better than the men who direct it. Four thousand years of business progress between the two Bagdads have not taken from man his God-given power to make or break the best of systems. And Macy's, with its own business system organized, carefully developed and upbuilded through sixty-three long years, is still dependent to no little degree upon the faith and loyalty and interest of its men and women; that same thing which in the days of the war just past we first learned to know by that new name—morale.

Under the sign of the Red Star there are at all times these days not less than five thousand workers; in the Christmas season this pay-roll list runs quickly to seven thousand or over. Then it is that the Macy family takes its most impressive dimensions. Seven thousand souls! It is the population of a good sized town! It is four good regiments—it is the New York Hippodrome with every one of its seats filled and eighteen hundred folk left standing up!

Yet even the all-the-year minimum of five thousand men and women—roughly speaking, one-third men and two-thirds women—is an impressive array. It is a human force which only gains impressiveness when one finds that all but three hundred of it are employed beneath a single roof. The small outside group chiefly comprises those in the delivery stations.

To bring action, foresight, co-operation, correlation—and finally morale—into such a force is a thing not gained by merely talking or thinking about it, but by long study, experimentation and great continued effort.

Which means, in turn, that Macy's, among several other things, is a responsibility. For, as we shall presently see, there are any number of problems in addition to those of buying and selling; problems in the solving of which unceasing demands are made upon the store's time, money and heart. It is, in the last analysis a matter of mere good business at that. Yet at Macy's it has been considerably more. And the store's satisfaction in realizing that it was a very early and a very advanced pioneer in developing personnel—and morale—as necessary factors in modern merchandising is a very large one indeed.

A machine or a family—or a department-store—is only as good as its component parts, and by the fact that there is a strict interdependence between the whole and its parts, the success of Macy's must mean that the rank and file of its employees maintain a high average of intelligence, initiative and loyalty. That these qualities are successfully co-ordinated in Macy's is due to real leadership, and it is to this same leadership that we may look for the basis of the store's morale.

Little things indicate. And indicate clearly. Here on the wall of the passageway at the head of the main employee's stair is a placard which reads:

"Once each month three prizes are given to the employees who make the best suggestions for the betterment of store service or conditions. Don't hesitate to try for a prize, even if your suggestion does not appear important. We need your ideas and like to have as many as possible presented each month. Write plainly

and drop your suggestions in the boxes furnished for this purpose. The first prize is $10.00, the second $5.00, and the third $2.00."

Here is only a single one of the many evidences of Macy co-operation with the employees. Yet it illustrates clearly the house's policy of making its workers feel an interest in and beyond the mere amount of money that they draw at the end of the week. Not a few of these prizes are awarded for suggestions as to procedure in technical matters relating to the details of the business. Some of them result in the saving of time—and consequently money—and others in the improvement of working conditions. For example: ten dollars was awarded to the man who suggested that the doors of fitting-rooms be equipped with signals to show whether or not they are occupied; five dollars went to the one who made the suggestion that the fire-axe and hook standing in the corner of the customers' stairway be placed on the wall in a suitable case so that children could not play with them; two dollars to her who advanced the very reasonable idea that a scratch-pad in the 'phone booths would prevent memoranda and art manifestations being made upon the walls. Here are a few suggestions that were proffered and acted upon. The entire list runs to a considerable length.

There is another notice upon the big bulletin board at the head of the employees' stairs—a sort of town-crier affair with temporary and permanent notices of interest to the store's workers—which tells the working force that when vacancies occur within the big store

they will be promptly posted on this and other bulletin boards. The workers are advised to apply for any position which they may feel they are competent to fill. Ambition is not curbed in Macy's. On the contrary, it is stimulated to every possible extent. The employee is restricted only by his own limitations, if he has them. It is a firmly-fixed house policy to promote, wherever it is at all possible, from its own ranks. Among its high-salaried men and women are not a few who have worked their way up from the bottom. In fact, among these six or eight of the best paid men in the store, is one who boasts that he first came to New York fifteen years ago, with but a suitcase and eleven dollars in his pocket.

The employment department must have been very much on the job when it hired this man. It generally is very much on its job.

Obviously, the hiring of workers for an enterprise as huge as Macy's cannot be conducted on any hit-and-miss plan. We have gone far enough with the store in these pages to see that hit-and-miss does not figure at any time or place in its varied functionings—and nowhere less than in its employment department. The hiring of new workers for the store is indeed a branch of the business machine that receives constant and great care and systematic attention. A store must employ the right sort of people in order to be a good store. This is fairly axiomatic these days.

These workers are gathered in a variety of ways—by volunteer applications, by newspaper advertisements (in New York and outside of it), by outside free

employment agencies, by circular appeals generally to educational institutions, and, best of all, through the solicitation of its regular employees. There is no appeal for a worker that, in my opinion, can compare with the suggestion made by an employee that the place of his or her employment is a good place for his or her friends, as well.

I am warmly concurred with in this opinion by the store's employment manager, a big, upstanding man, who in his Harvard days was a famous football player. The rules of that fine game he has brought to the understanding of his present problem.

"One of the most desirable class of applicants is that brought by our own employees," he says, frankly, "as in hiring these people we have a feeling of security; especially if they have been brought in by some of the old and most loyal employees. It has been our experience that such applicants enter more readily into the spirit of their work and develop more rapidly than those obtained from other sources. We advertise in the classified columns of the newspapers only when it is absolutely necessary. Our regular daily advertisements keep the store constantly before the public eye—and generally that is enough.

"During the recent war period, however, we had no scruples about advertising, as nearly every other line of endeavor was in the same boat as we. Never before have the newspapers carried so much classified advertising. Yet when all is said and done, besides the moral undesirability of this source of supply, we found it also very expensive indeed.

"Some people believe that the function of an employment department is merely to keep in touch with the labor market and engage employees," he continued. "This is erroneous. The duty of this employment department is to raise the standard of efficiency of the whole working force by the proper selection, placing, following up and promotion of employees and so bringing about a condition that will result in their rendering as nearly as possible one hundred per cent. service to the store. That is the real reason why employment departments such as this first came into existence. Business some years ago awoke to the realization of the fact that its indiscriminate handling of the entire labor problem was causing a tremendous economic waste, not alone to the employee and to society, but to itself. It then began for the first time to deal with the problem of its personnel in a scientific and practical way."

The market for workers—like pretty nearly every other sort of market—is, as we have just seen, subject to fluctuations; there are seasons when the employment manager—ranking as the store's fourth assistant general manager—must look sharply about him for the maintenance of its ranks, other seasons when long files of would-be workers present themselves each morning at his department doors. For the five or six years of the World War period the first set of conditions prevailed. It was difficult for any department-store, ranked by the Washington authorities in war days as a non-essential industry, always to maintain its full working force, to say nothing of its morale. Recently the pendulum

has swung in the other direction. America is not exempt from the labor conditions which are prevailing in the other great nations of the world. And there are plenty of people who would work in Macy's. Yet the store has refused to use this situation as a club over its workers. Throughout the darkest days of the business depression it told them that it had no intention either of reducing its force of workers (beyond the usual lay-off of extra Christmas people) or of reducing their individual salaries. Which was a considerable help to its *Esprit de corps*.

Yet even in the hardest days of labor shortage Macy's never ceased to be most particular as to the quality of its help. Applicants for positions underneath its roof were scrutinized with great care to make sure as to their desirability as additions to the organization. And before they finally were accepted and turned over to the training school, they were examined, with as much thoroughness as if there were hundreds of others in the file behind them, from whom the store might pick and choose.

All this is part and parcel of the definite management policy of the employment department, just as it is part of its policy to make sure that the prospective member of the Macy family has more than one arrow to his or her quiver. Alternate capabilities are assets not to be scorned. And there is an obvious store flexibility in being able to use its human units in a variety of endeavor that the management can hardly afford to ignore. And it does not.

There is a function of the employment department of the modern business machine that Macy's recognizes as second in importance only to that of engaging its workers. I am referring to that moment when they may leave its employ, either from choice or otherwise. If "otherwise"—in the colloquial phrasing of the store being "laid-off"—there is the greatest of care and discretion used.

"Remember the Golden Rule," says its general manager to his assistants, and says it again and again. "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. And remember that there is never a time when this Golden Rule is more necessary or applicable in business than in the moment of discharge."

Translated into the terms of hard fact this means that in Macy's no buyer, no department head, no department manager has the power to dismiss one of his workers. He may recommend the "lay-off" but only the general manager himself may actually accomplish the act. In which case he first refers the case to one of his five assistants, for personal investigation and recommendation.

When the saleswoman—or man, as the case may be—leaves of her own volition the matter becomes, in certain senses, more serious. Why is she dissatisfied? Are the conditions of labor more onerous at Macy's than in the other stores of the city, the remuneration less satisfactory? Macy's does not intend that either of these causes shall obtain beneath its roof. So the retiring employee, before she may leave its pay-roll, is carefully examined as to her reasons for going. The

last impressions of the store must be quite as good as the earliest ones—even upon the minds of its workers. And a careful system of observation and of record has been upbuilded to make sure that this is being obtained; which may often lead to valuable opportunities for the correction of store system, particularly in the relationship between Macy's and its employees.

We come now face to face with the training department—another individual organization strong enough and important enough to demand as its head an officer of the rank and title of assistant general manager. But before we come to consider it in some of the many aspects of its workings—before we come to see how in these recent years education has come to be the hand-maiden of merchandising, let us consider the actual experience of a young woman who recently entered the employment of the store. She was a college woman—a good many of the store people are these days. The mass of young women who come trooping out of our colleges each June are apt to find their employment bents trending more or less to a common course and in great cycles. Yesterday the cycle was teaching; the day before, literature or the sciences; today it is merchandising. The great department-stores of our metropolitan cities in America are, as we already know, today paying their executives and sub-executives salaries more than commensurate with the earnings of those in other lines of industry and well ahead of those in the learned professions. Moreover, they have brought their hours of employment down to

THE SCIENCE OF MODERN SALESMANSHIP

Education places the saleswoman of today at highest efficiency.
A Macy schoolroom

a point at least approaching those of other business organizations. Their appeal thus has become measurably greater. And they are reaping the reward—in the attraction of a higher grade of executive young women.

This young woman was of that type. And here is how she came to Macy's—told in her own words:

"Not at all long, long ago, I went rather hesitatingly into the rooms labeled 'employment office' at Macy's. 'Hesitatingly' because, if you have ever gone around very much looking for a job, you know that 'Welcome' is not always written on the door-mat that receives you. But it is at Macy's—and a woman, who made me feel that she was my friend by the warmth of her smile, talked with me and after filling out the usual blanks I was told when to report for work. They were mighty decent, too, about trying to place me selling the kind of merchandise that *I* wanted to sell—and that means a lot!

"The Monday morning that I came to work was, of course, rather hard—it's not easy to go into any strange and new place and be crazy about it right at first! There were a lot of us—all new girls—and it was fun to see what they did to us. We went from the employment office, where there is a good sign reading 'Say "we" not "I" and "ours" not "my",' to our locker room (which, by the way, is the best of any of the places I have ever worked in) and then up to the training department for a little first time; after which they sent us to our respective departments. We felt rather like ping-pong balls, being knocked hither and thither,

and though we didn't know why we were doing any of these things we trusted that those holding the ping-pong bat did.

"While we were waiting up there in the training department, we had a chance to get to know each other a little—two or three of us were charmingly Irish—and time to note the people busy about that department. Nice efficient-looking people they were—and of course we labeled and cubby-holed them. One man, we all decided, could well be a matinee idol and another might have hailed from down Greenwich Village way.

"At last we parted and went down through the store to our own departments—and on the way any importance which we may have felt was quickly submerged in seeing what a distressingly small part we were of the large Macy organization. Even so, we later found out how many, many other 'we's' like each of us could make a deal of trouble for it, should we fail to carry on our work correctly. A talk we had from the store manager, a little later on, made me feel directly responsible to the poor fellows who are the Macy delivery men. If I were not careful to write the address clearly in my salesbook, the delivery man would get in trouble—and all because of my handwriting! Funny, how we were all linked up together.

"Well, to go back, I got to my department feeling decidedly unimportant, and was put to work behind a counter which sold women's and children's woolen gloves and women's kid gloves. That was the first counter I had ever sold from. In other stores I have

sold from what are known as 'open departments'; the counter trade was a revelation to me. Did you ever notice the lack of space behind the counters in the stores? Well, with the Christmas rush and all the extra salesgirls, it is lucky indeed that some of us have a sense of humor.

"I had not been behind the counter for two whole minutes before a customer came along and asked for something. I tried to look wise and answer. It was all terribly new. The customers are always so plentiful in Macy's that a new girl hardly has time to have the old girls tell her about the stock. Moreover, our counter was very near the store's main entrance—which meant that we were an informal but very busy little information bureau on our own account—not only about Macy's but apparently anything else in the city of New York.

"Of course, I didn't have a salesbook that day; I didn't receive one until after I had had some training and was beginning to know something about the Macy system. However, customers could not see the 'new-and-green' written on my face, so I waited on them thick and fast; even through that first morning. And a wild time I had of it—gym was never so exhausting as stooping down to look for a certain pair of gloves which must be a certain color combined with a certain size, plus a certain style and so on. Some people must stay up nights figuring along the lines of permutations and combinations, so as to work out some unheard of ones for the things they ask for in Macy's. The other girls were mighty nice to me, though, and as helpful

as could be. And our having to almost walk upon one another and squeezing past and bumping so often—why, you all get clubby, mighty soon. At the end of that first day I was rather wrecked, though happy—for in my desire to find things for customers speedily I had, in bending down, burst through the knee of one stocking, broken a corset-stay and ripped loose a garter! Henceforth I managed to dress in a manner prepared for doing gymnastic stunts, such as deep-knee-bending and leap-frog.

"My first lesson on the store system came on my first day in the store—and then one every day for an hour, during the whole first week. I liked that—for then I knew how things were supposed to be done. They even took us out into departments that were not busy early in the morning and had us make out certain kinds of sales right behind the counter, and carry the whole thing through—all that was lacking being the *real* customer. It gave us confidence and showed us things that we thought we knew, but that, when it came right down to it, we didn't know at all. The training department also gave us pamphlets and notices about how to use the telephones and telling us to do certain things, as well as how our salary and commission were to be figured. Also one leaflet told us about Macy's underselling policy, and what we should do in case a customer reported merchandise as being cheaper somewhere else—and, although I had heard before of this policy of Macy's, I came to believe in it faithfully, after I had read the booklet.

"When you're new in a department the 'higher up'

man can do much to make you feel glad that you are there. My section manager and buyer were both fine. The buyer told us in a talk she gave us all about how she'd been with Macy's for twenty-five years; that she had worked for several years, when she first began, at six dollars a week. She made us feel that there surely must be a chance for every one of us—that a firm that is worth staying with that long must be pretty fine indeed—and that it was just up to us individually, whether or not we would go ahead. As for our section manager, he was always so nice in the way he handled any transaction with us—giving us an extended lunch-hour or signing any sales checks that needed his 'O. K.' In many stores the section managers are so disagreeable about doing their work that the salesgirls hate to have them 'O. K.' things—but I have found it quite the opposite at Macy's. And when he had the time and saw any of us looking glum or tired our man would talk to us and succeed in cheering us up.

"There are many things, too, that I discovered Macy's doing for its employees—all sorts of clubs and parties. One of the most useful of the first of these I found to be the umbrella club. All I had to do one day when it began unexpectedly to rain was to go up to the training department, deposit fifty cents and receive an umbrella. If I left Macy's within the month, I would get my fifty cents back. Of course, I was to return the umbrella the very first clear day but any time thereafter that I needed one I could go upstairs and get it.

"Then, too, there's the recreation room—you have

two fifteen-minute relief periods a day in the store in addition to your lunch time. You can go to the dressing rooms and wash up a bit and then go to the recreation room, where there are plenty of large, comfy chairs, a piano, books and the like. The room is a veritable social center all the day long—I always found lots of friends there, no matter at what time I took my relief periods. And you go back to your work refreshed and 'full of pep' once again. Another place where you have a chance to see your friends is the employees' lunchroom—and it certainly is a popular place. Despite the clatter and rush, the Macy folks have a good time in their cafeteria; the crowds that eat there every day prove the wholesomeness of its food. It is good home cooking and, as far as its cheapness is concerned—well, I've eaten veritable dinners there at the noon hour, day after day, and never had my check total more than twenty-five cents; with thirteen or fifteen nearer the average.

"One morning we all came early to the store—to a courtesy rally. Thousands of us—yes, literally thousands of us—gathered on the main floor, on the central stair and everywhere roundabout it, and we sang songs about smiling; and other optimistic things. Then, after good addresses by Mr. Straus and Mr. Spillman, we all sang again and, in response to an inquiry from one of the store executives, all shouted that we would try to carry on with the new Macy slogan of 'A smile with every package' and 'a thank you as goodbye.' "

Frank testimony, indeed. And honest.

To bring this atmosphere about the worker in the store may no more be the result of hit-and-miss than the right sort of hiring. In the modern marts of the new Bagdad the creation of morale, not merely the retention of a good industrial relationship between a store and its workers but a constant bettering of it, has come to be as important a problem as that of the buying or the delivering of its merchandise, or even its problems of making its public constantly acquainted with its offerings and advantages.

The work of such a department—in Macy's the department of training—divides itself quite logically and clearly into two great avenues; the one educational, the other recreational. Each takes hold of the newcomer to the store almost from the very moment that he or she enters upon its lists of employment. The new salesgirl's name is hardly upon the rolls of the department to which she is assigned before a member of the store's reception committee is upon her heels and steering her straight through all the maze of fresh experiences that necessarily must await the novitiate. She is told all about her time disc of brass—the individual coin that bears her distinctive number (built up of her department number plus her own serial one) which she must drop into its allotted slot at the employees' entrance when she comes to it in the morning and which she must see is returned to her before the day is done in order that she may have it to use again upon the morrow; how, going from the locker room to her department at the day's beginning, she must sign its own time-roll, which then becomes

accountable for her comings and goings through the rest of the day; how she can go and when she must return; how she is paid—her salary, her quota, her commissions, her bonuses.

All of this might sound complicated, indeed, to the new girl, were it not for the kindness of her assigned "committeeman." Complications in the hands of a woman who has been through the mill, herself, and who has come to see how they are really not complications at all, but cogs in the grinding wheels of a great and systematic machine, are easily explained. The new girl catches on. The simple but accurate psychological tests through which she was put before she was accepted for Macy's assure this. She catches on and within a year—perhaps within a space of but a few months—she, herself, is on the reception committee and helping other new girls through the maze of first employment.

The new girl catches on—

There lies before me, as I write these paragraphs, a neatly typewritten loose-leaf memorandum book. It is the work of a girl who has yet to round out her first year in Macy's and it is a work that all must produce before they may hope for very definite advancement.

This typewritten book is, in itself, a book of the Macy store. Its pages are a brief, succinct and thorough account of the store's organization, its selling policies—including, of course, the stressed under-selling policy—and its methods. Yet it is much more, too. It is, if you please, a manual of salesmanship. Under a heading, "Steps in an Ideal Sale," these are not only

enumerated but are given relative values in percentages. Thus we see that "attracting attention" is twenty per cent.; "arousing interest," twenty; "creating desire," fifteen; "closing sale," twenty; "introducing new merchandise," ten; and "securing good will," fifteen. Under each of these sub-heads, the salesclerk has collected a group of points necessary to their attainment. Thus, under "attracting attention" one finds "facial expression" and under it, in turn, "pleasant and expectant."

All of these things have been taught the salesgirl author of this book—the volume, itself, is the result of her notes at her lecture classes. When she is taught "attracting attention" she is told that alongside of "facial expression" there comes "tone of voice," and under this last there are five distinct classifications: "audible, distinct, sincere, rhythmical, suited to customer." Truly the science of salesmanship goes to far lengths these days. From time to time the store has engaged a professional teacher of elocution to take up and carry forward this last function of its work. Here is this saleswoman being taught that "swell" is a word forever to be avoided over the counter, "smart," "stylish," "fashionable," "original," and some others being substituted. Similarly "elegant," "grand," "nifty," "classy," "cheap," "awfully" and "terribly" are under the ban, appropriate synonyms being suggested to replace them. "Flat" is not to be used, when "apartment" is meant. The entire list of words to be avoided in a Macy sales conversation runs to a considerable length.

This particular saleswoman was trained to textile salesmanship. Consequently, although the first half of her book, which treats of the store's methods and policies, is common to those that are being prepared by her fellows in all the other selling departments, the second half is the result of the special training that was given her in the department of training along the lines of her own merchandise. Not only did she spend long hours of the firm's time in its classroom upon the third floor of the store and surrounded by cabinets in which were displayed textile materials of every sort and in every stage of development, but she was given a printed booklet which told her much about her merchandise, its history, its production fields and the details of its manufacture.

From it she evolved her own history of textiles, setting down with accuracy the four fundamental cloths—cotton, linen, silk and wool—and not alone tracing their development and manufacture, but by means of carefully hand-made diagrams, pointing out the difference between the different textures and weavings. "Warp" and "weft" and "twill" have come to be more than mere words to her. They are a part of her business capital, which she can—and does—turn to the good account of the store. So she is to her compeer of twenty-five years ago—selling dress-goods in the old Macy store down on Fourteenth Street—as the electric light of today is to the old-fashioned lamps of that day and generation.

Back of this little black-bound notebook there is

system—organization if you would read it that way. Education, of a truth, has become the handmaiden of merchandising. And the store's school has become one of its ranking functions.

As teachers in this school there is a specially trained corps of men and women who do nothing but instruct and then follow up their pupils to see that they put into practice the things that they have learned. The educational work consists of individual instruction, informal classes and practical demonstrations. And the result of it all is not merely to make the employee valuable to the house, but to lend interest to merchandising, itself, and to lift the salesperson out of the mere mechanical process of taking orders for goods.

The moment that a new employee comes into the Macy store his or her instruction in its system, organization and salesmanship begins. We have just seen how one typical new saleswoman began receiving her training from the first day of her employment. She was no exception to an inflexible rule. The training is given invariably. It does not matter whether the applicant has had experience in other large department-stores. Even a former Macy employee, accepting re-employment, must go through the department of training for, like everything that grows, the store system changes steadily from year to year and from month to month.

A school such as this must have teachers. It is futile to add that they must be specially trained and thoroughly competent in every way to fulfill the

unusual task set before them. And this, of itself, has been a problem, not alone with Macy's, but with the other large department-stores of New York. They have co-operated to solve it, with the direct result that some two or three years ago retail store training became a practical factor in the city's educational system. Under the enthusiastic aid of Doctor Lee Galloway, its head, the successful and rapidly expanding business division of New York University created the school of retail selling, bearing the name of and affiliated with the parent institution. The merchants of New York raised a fund of $100,000 for the establishment and promotion of this enterprise and from it last June came its first graduating class—young men and women qualified to teach store training in the great bazaars of our modern Bagdad.

The purposes of this school are set forth succinctly in its first manual, which has come off the press. Its object is "to dignify retail selling through education in the following ways: To train teachers in retail selling for public high schools and for retail stores, to train employees of retail stores for executive positions and to do special research work for the department managers of retail stores."

In accordance with the first of these expressed avenues of its endeavors the Board of Estimate of the city of New York already has begun to move in full co-operation. A high school in the lower west side of Manhattan—the Haaren High School at Hubert and Collister Streets—has been designated as training center for this work. Girls are there being taught retail

selling. Nearly one hundred already are entered in the course and within a few short months the larger stores of the city will begin to benefit by this highly practical educational work.

That this experiment will prove successful seems now to be well beyond the shadows of doubt. Yet such success will be in no small measure due to the individual efforts of Dr. Michael H. Lucey, principal of the Julia Richman High School—in West Thirteenth Street, just back of Macy's original store—who has devoted great energies to its launching. Convinced, from the outset, of the real necessity of a training course in retail selling in the city schools, Dr. Lucey makes no secret of his dubious fears at the beginning of the experiment:

"I honestly didn't see how we were going to do it," he says, in frankly discussing the entire matter, "the tradition in favor of an office career rather than a selling one in a store has so long ruled in the high schools of the city. There are several reasons for this—the most important one, in my mind, the feeling in the average high school girl's head that less education having been required in past years for the girl behind the counter than for the girl behind the typewriter, she lost a certain definite sort of caste, if she followed the first of these callings. Of course, that is utter rubbish. I have no hesitancy today in telling my girls that if they are looking for a genuine career retail selling is the thing for them. In office work, if they are very good, they may get up to forty or even fifty dollars a week but

there they are pretty nearly sure to come to a standstill."

The skilled educator shakes his head as he says this.

"You see the difficulty is that so many girls coming out of schools such as these look upon business not as a boy would look at it, as a career with indefinite and permanent possibilities, but rather as a bridge between schooling and matrimony—a bridge of but four, or five, or six years. And when they are frank with me—and they often are—and tell me of this bridge that is in their minds, I am frank to advise office work. It offers better immediate returns—yet in the long run none that are even comparable with those of a high-grade department-store."

Following the successful plan of the University of Cincinnati in its technical engineering courses, the students down at Haaren are grouped into working pairs, which means that, in practice and working in alternation, each goes to school every other week. In the week that one is in the classroom, her partner is in one of the city stores studying retail selling at first hand. When, at the end of six days, she returns to her schoolroom she has many questions derived from her actual practice to put to her instructor. So the practice and the principles of this new hard-headed science are kept hand in hand with its actual workings.

Nor is this all: some six or seven hundred young women—and young men, too—are also making a special study of retail selling in the city's evening schools. A single course at the DeWitt Clinton High

School is quite typical of these. Four evenings a week, for two hours each evening, a huge class is being taught—in an even more detailed way than is possible under a department-store roof—the principles and manufacture of textiles. In these classes a goodly number of the Macy family are enrolled. Another goodly enrollment goes into the special lectures given by a museum instructor at the Metropolitan Museum of Art on certain evenings and Sunday afternoons.

Truly, indeed, education has become the handmaiden of merchandising.

As teachers in Macy's department of training there are enrolled today only those men and women who have received a thorough normal school education in this great new science of retailing. They do nothing but instruct the store's workers and then follow up to make sure that these are putting into practice the principles in which they have just been instructed. Except for the training of the future executives the school time is taken entirely from regular business hours and so, at the expense of the house, itself. This schooling—under the Macy roof, please remember—consists of individual instruction, informal classes and practical demonstration.

Specialized training under the roof includes instruction under the direct supervision of the Board of Education in fundamental school subjects to those classed as "juniors" and "delinquent seniors"; a junior salesmanship course given to all employees promoted from the non-selling divisions of the store to its selling

divisions; a senior salesmanship class—including the study of textiles and non-textiles, and covering three busy months; the instruction of special groups of sales-clerks to be transferred for special sales; "demonstration sales," in which teacher and pupil "play store," with the teacher impersonating various types of customers; the executive course to prepare employees for high executive positions of different rank and order; and the specialized instruction for dictaphone and comptometer operators, correspondence and file clerks and the like.

In the limited space of this book, I shall have no opportunity to carry you further into the details of this fascinating department of the modern store. The saleswoman's little black book that we saw but a few minutes ago ought to show it more clearly to your eyes than any elaborate presentments of schedules and curriculums. The result's the thing. And Macy's has the results. It has already achieved them. Not only has it lifted retail selling from the hard and rutty road of cold commercialism but it has lifted the individual seller, himself—which, to my way of thinking, is to be accounted a good deal of a triumph. In such a triumph society at large shares—and shares not a little.

It is house policy—sound policy—to encourage employees to look out not only for the store's interest, but for their own. An ambitious salesman is indeed an asset; and there are ways of keeping him ambitious. There is, for instance, the system of bonuses for punctuality, which takes the final form of extra holidays in

the summertime. A week's holiday with pay is given without fail to each and every employee of eight months' standing. But a record of good attendance and punctuality for fifty long weeks brings another week of vacation, also with full pay. Department-stores not so long ago used to penalize their workers for tardiness. The new Macy plan works best, however.

The list of those bonus possibilities is long. There is, of course, chief amongst them, the bonus which takes the concrete form of a sales commission. The sales-clerk is set a moderate quota for his or her week's work. On sales that reach above this figure he or she is paid a percentage commission. And, lest you may be tempted to dismiss this statement with a mere shrug of the shoulders, as a perfunctory thing perhaps, permit me to tell you that but last year a retail salesman in the furniture department earned in excess of $6,000 in wages and commissions.

One other thing before we are done with this main chapter on the Macy family and starting up another which shall show the super-household at its play; it is a thing closely associated both with department-store employment and training: this "special squad" which has become so distinctive a feature of the big red-brick selling enterprise in Herald Square. Concretely, it is a group of college graduates—the heads of the firm are themselves college men and have none of the contempt for education that has become so blatant a thing in the minds of so many "self-made business captains" of today—who desire to enter upon this fascinating and

comparatively new field of department-store service.

As one of the executives of the department of training himself says, "Many of these young grads come in here with the rattle of their brand-new diplomas so loud in their ears that for quite a while they can't hear anything else."

Yet they are good material—as a rule, uncommonly good material. So Dr. Michael Lucey says, and Dr. Lucey knows. As a supplement to his educational work in the commercial high schools he entered Macy's last summer and spent the two months of his vacation in the special squad, studying the store from a variety of intimate and personal angles. On his first day in it, the distinguished educator sold clothing—men's clothing—and he sold to his first customer, an accomplishment which he notes with no little pride. His pride at the moment was large. But the next moment was destined to take a fall. A floor manager down the aisle espied the new clerk.

"Don't let those trousers sweep the floor," he admonished.

And the educator had his first taste of store discipline.

Sooner or later all these young men out of college get that first taste. It does not harm them. And it is not very long before they begin to observe that, after all, there are still a few things about which they know practically nothing. After which their real education begins.

A department-store is, among other things, a great melting pot. An Englishman who came into Macy's

special squad last year inquired just what work might be expected of him. He was told.

"Manual labor," he protested, "I can't think of it. I wear the silver badge."

Which meant that he was one of the King's own—a pensioner of the late war. The store executive who first handled this bit of human raw material possessed a deal of real tact; most of them do. He smiled gently upon the Britisher.

"After all," he suggested, "you know you don't have to tell your King that you had to use your two good hands in hard work."

The Englishman saw the point. He laughed, shook hands and went to work. In six months he was an executive, himself. It's a way that they have at Macy's. And here is part of the way.

Manual labor is demanded invariably of those who enlist in the special squad. It has a regular system through which each of its workers must pass. First he is given the history and development of the store and of its policies. This work is followed by a week on the receiving platform and then a good stiff session in the marking-room. The college boy follows the merchandise along a little further. He proceeds for a while to sell it—then does the work of a section manager. After which there come, in logical sequence, the delivery department, the bureau of investigation, the comptroller's office, the tube system, an intensive study of the departments of employment and of training. These are not only studied but written reports are made upon them. After which he should have a

pretty fair idea of the store and the things for which it stands.

The course is only varied in slight detail for the woman college graduate. Macy's has naught but the highest regard for the gentler sex—not alone as its patrons but as members of its staff—yesterday, today and tomorrow. A woman may not be able to handle heavy cases upon the receiving platform. But there are other sorts of cases that she may handle—and frequently with a tact and diplomacy not often shown by the more oppressed sex. I might cite a hundred instances from within the store where she has shown both—and initiative as well. But I shall give only one—where initiative played the largest part. Some few months ago a young woman who has climbed high in the store organization, to the important post of buyer of a most important line of muslin wearing apparel, found herself in France, but a few hours before the steamer upon which she was booked to sail to the United States was to depart from Southampton. To take a steamer across the Channel and then catch her boat was quite out of the question. She did the next best thing. She hopped on an aëroplane and flew from Paris to London; seemingly in almost less time than it here takes to tell it. She caught her boat. Her instructions were to catch the boat. And long since she had acquired the Macy habit of obeying orders.

Upon this, again, a whole volume might be written—upon the thoroughness of an organization which really organizes, a training department that really trains, a system which really systematizes. And all under the

title of a family group—in which affection and tact and understanding come into play quite as often as discipline and energy and initiative.

VII. The Family at Play

IN the business machine of yesterday there were no adjustments for play. It prided itself upon its efficiency. And in the next breath it proclaimed that such efficiency left no room whatsoever for such foolishness as recreation. Today we know much better. We know that play—healthy, uniform play in a decent amount—is one of the very finest of tonics for the human frame. And so count it as one of the very highest factors in our modern schemes of efficiency.

Macy's plays and makes no secret of the fact. On the contrary, it is intensely proud of its provisions for the welfare of its workers. Industrial recreation is no mere idle phrase to it. In hard fact no small portion of the remarkable esprit de corps of the store is due to its well organized recreational and social service work. In a large measure this part of the operation of the store corresponds to what the War and Navy Departments did through their Commissions on Training Camp Activities during the great war. Bearing in mind our likening Macy's to an army in an earlier chapter, the parallel now becomes a close one indeed. Organized recreation promoted better team work in the war; it now promotes better team work in business. Ergo, it is for the welfare of Macy's that it shall promote organized recreation beneath its own roof.

And yet that very phrase, "welfare work," is not often used underneath that roof. It has the flavor of patronage which is so wholly lacking in this family of thousands, and so it is thrust forever into the discard. "The bunch" gets together—you see, you may call the family by almost any name that pleases you best—various groups are forever assembling at the Men's Club or the Community Club and making plans for their numerous activities. And these last cover a surprisingly large range.

Any male employee of the store may join the Macy Men's Club. It is a wholly self-governing body and, aside from making up the inevitable deficits that accrue, the store has no paternalistic or direct attitude whatsoever toward it. The club itself is situated at 156 West Thirty-fifth Street, just west of the store, but entirely separated from it. It occupies two floors of an extremely comfortable building. In its externals it differs very little from any other sort of men's club. There are a reading room and a smoking room where, toward the close of the day and well into the evening, its members may relax. And there is a restaurant serving extremely good meals.

It is only as one pokes beneath the surface that he begins to find out how very real this small institution, that is an offshoot of the larger one, really is. Its restaurant serves meals at considerably less than cost. And the fact that this club is regarded as something more than a mere combination of eating-place and rest-room is shown by its organization activities in other directions. For example, its members interest them-

selves in general athletics to the extent that, in the proper seasons, they have very creditable teams of baseball, basketball, football and the like, while occasional outings with suitable field events are arranged. Each Thursday evening there is organized athletic work in a large private gymnasium that is especially hired for the purpose.

In fact it is at this last point that the Men's Club comes in contact with the Community Club, which is the nucleus organization covering other recreational activities among the women, the girls and the younger men of the store family. For, by careful planning, both of these clubs manage to use the big gymnasium of a single evening, while, after the athletic work is over, the floor is cleared and there is dancing until going-home time.

These comforts are not given without some cost to the Macy folk. That would be very bad business indeed. It has been so decided long since. And so, while it may be human nature to be ever on the lookout for "something for nothing," it is quite as human to derive very much additional enjoyment from the things for which one pays. Even the suggestion of charity is not pleasant. And with this in view these clubs charge nominal sums for their privileges. In so doing they earn the respect of those who share in them.

Dues for the Men's Club are placed at three dollars a year—that surely is a nominal figure. These go toward the development of club activities outside of its actual running expenses (rent, the restaurant, etc.). The gymnasium fee is another three dollars, which is

much less than one would pay for a similar facility elsewhere in New York.

The scale of charges for the Community Club is quite different. The dues here are but twenty-five cents a year—its membership is made up mainly of lower-salaried folk—with small extra charges for special activities. For instance, the Spanish class, which is taught by one of the Spanish interpreters in the store and which has a constant attendance of about forty, costs its pupils the very inconsiderable sum of five cents a lesson. The gymnasium charge is kept in a like ratio. There are a few others in addition. The aggregate cost, however, of as many activities as an average employee can take up is of little moment or burden to him or to her—nothing as compared with the sense of independence that goes with the small act of payment.

The Choral Club, under the direction of a competent leader, meets Wednesday evenings in the big recreation room on the third floor of the store, with a usual attendance of about two hundred men and women who are trained in part singing and in chorus work of various sorts. This is not only enjoyable and popular for its own sake but it has an added value in leading toward the organizing of the store's talent for concerts and for musical plays.

And it has such talent. Do not forget that—not even for a passing moment. It would be odd, indeed, if a family of five thousand folk did not develop upon demand much real histrionic and artistic ability of every sort. And when such potentialities are fostered and encouraged, the results—well, they are such as to warn

Florenz Ziegfeld and the rest of the Forty-second Street theatrical producers to keep a sharp eye, indeed, upon Macy's.

On Monday evenings, the entire winter long and well into the spring, the Dramatic Club meets and here every budding Maxine Elliott or Ina Claire has her full opportunity. On Tuesday there is a get-together evening—one begins to think with all these evenings so neatly filled of the calendar of a real social enterprise—and then one sees the store family at its fullest relaxation. Here was a recent Tuesday night. It was just before Christmas and the store was approaching the annual peak load of its year's traffic. Yet it had no intention whatsoever of relaxing a single one of its social endeavors.

On this particular Tuesday evening our salesgirl—the one whom we saw but a moment ago being inducted into the selling organism of the store—made her first personal acquaintance with the Community Club. Let her tell her own story, and in her own way:

"Up in the recreation room a few hundred of us gathered for a regular party. Some few of us had gone home after store hours for our dinner; the others had had it right in the store's own lunchroom. It surely is great the way that you *can* get a meal there in Macy's at any time you are staying late—either on duty or on pleasure.

"At about six-thirty the evening's program got under way—so that the many friendly, chattering groups of girls in the big room finally had to simmer down to something approaching silence. Then the Choral Club

began singing for us—some good, old-time Christmas carols first, and then some other songs. All of us joined finally in the chorus, leaving the club to carry the difficult parts. They could do that all right, too. Mr. Janpolski, their leader, finally gave us a solo and after that there was a grand march led by our own beloved Marjorie Sidney. Everybody joined in—not only in body, but in spirit. It was like Washington's Birthday in the big gym up at Northampton. Messenger girls, college graduates, salesfolk, deliverymen, managers—everyone was just the same in that blessèd hour. Distinctions of the store were gone. We were boys and girls—some of us a bit grown up and grayed to be sure, but all with Peter Pannish hearts—having a real party once again.

"The grand march ended in dancing for every one—with a jolly negro at the piano doing his level best to uphold the reputation of his race for really spontaneous music. Finally, after many encore dances, everybody withdrew from the floor and out came Mr. Salek, the director of the Men's Club, and Miss Knowles, doing an almost professional dance. The Castles had very little on this couple—the way Salek lifted his partner and then let her down—slowly, slowly, still more slowly—reminded me of Maurice and Walton. Their performance brought down the house. Of course they had to respond to encores; again and again and again.

"Following this—for Macy's believes that variety is the spice of all life—a Junior recited the unforgetable 'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the house.' She really was a darling. And how Christ-

massy she looked, with her big butterfly sash and her hairbow of scarlet tulle . . . Next on the program came dancing—for everybody. First, however, there was another march, so that each couple received a number—while every little while certain numbers (the couples that held them) were eliminated from the floor. The nicest part about this elimination dance, as they called it, was that instead of only the last couple getting the prize, as is generally done—every couple, as soon as its number was called and it left the floor, went over to a big chimney-top, with a proverbially jolly 'Santa' peering out of it. There Santa gave to each one a little gift, such as a whistle, a stick of candy, or a jolly little rattle. Then, after more dancing, refreshments were served by gaily garbed Junior waitresses. After which the dancing continued until the merry Community Club Christmas dance was entirely over."

Already I have touched upon the annual vacation of the Macy worker—one week with pay after eight months continuous employment, two weeks after two years, three weeks after five years, and a month after twenty-five years of service. A charming retreat among the hills of Sullivan County, eighty-seven miles from New York and, through the foresight of the management of the store, purchased long ago, provides an ideal vacation spot for the Macy girls who wish to spend their holidays among truly rural surroundings. For this purpose a large farm house and a hundred acres of surrounding land were acquired by Macy's and

more than fifty thousand dollars spent in enlarging the house, beautifying the grounds and otherwise making them suitable for their summertime uses. In addition to the big and immaculately white farm house there are three cottages upon the property. As many as sixty-five girls can be accommodated at a single time upon it.

Three jumps or so from the main house and stretched out in front of it is a lake; a regular lake, if you please, big enough for boating and for bathing, although not so large that one of the keen-eyed chaperones may keep her weather eye on those of her charges whose tastes run toward water sports. In this Adamless Eden bloomers and middy blouses are *de rigueur*, and as the few restraints imposed are only those inspired by ordinary good sense, the girls experience the real joys of living.

All of these activities and interests—and many, many more besides—are faithfully chronicled in the Macy house organ, *Sparks*. Here is a monthly magazine—of some sixteen pages, each measuring seven by ten inches—that in appearance alone would grace any newsstand, while its contents almost invariably bear out the attractiveness of its cover designs. Practically the entire publication is prepared by its staff, which, in turn, is composed of members of the Macy family.

House organs, such as this, are, of course, no novelty in the American business world of today. There probably are not less than fifty department-stores alone which are now printing brisk contemporaries of *Sparks*. The internal publications of a house, such as Macy's,

have long since come to be recognized as one of its most valuable media for the promotion of morale. It costs money, but it is money well expended. So says modern business. And modern business ought to know. For it has tested the results. And the house organ long since became one of the really valuable aides.

Here, then, in *Sparks* is not only a medium in which the Macy folks may come the better to know about one another, a bulletin board upon which the heads of the house may from time to time carry very direct and sincere messages to their big family, but a mouthpiece in which the embryo literary genius may become articulate. And, lest you be tempted to believe that I have permitted simile to carry me quite away from fact, let me show you a single instance—there are a number of others beside—in which a real literary genius has come to bloom underneath the great roof that looks down upon Herald Square:

His pen name is Francis Carlin—but his real name, the one under which he entered Macy's, is James Francis Carlin MacDonnell. Of him *Current Opinion* but a year or two ago said: "The writer (Carlin) . . . was until a few weeks ago a floorwalker in one of the big department-stores of New York City (Macy's) and was discovered by Padraic Colum. He had his book obscurely printed and it has been unobtainable at bookstores until recently. . . . It has the true Celtic quality. The dedication alone is worth the price of admission: 'It is here that the book begins and it is here that a prayer is asked for the soul of the scribe who wrote it for the glory of God, the honor of Erin and

the pleasure of the woman who came from both—his mother.'"

Mr. MacDonnell has written two books: this first, *My Ireland,* and more recently the *Cairn of Stones.* That he has great talent is again attested by *The Boston Transcript* which said recently: "Mr. Carlin's Celtic poems, ballads and lyrics are nearer the fine perfection of the native poets belonging to the Celtic renaissance than those produced by any poet of Irish blood born in America."

After which, who may now dare say that genius may not blossom in a department-store? And even were it not for the gaining glory of Carlin, the pages of any current issue of *Sparks* would show that there is more than a deal of artistic merit in the widespread ranks of the Macy family. The desire for self-expression is never stunted. And the pages of its avenue of expression are read by none more closely than the members of the family who hold the ownership of Macy's.

And yet these men—the heads of the great merchandising house—are not only accessible to their business family through the printed word. They are not standoffish. On the contrary, they are most widely known throughout the store; most reachable, both within their offices and without. Take the single matter of grievances, for a most important instance: A Macy worker may feel that justice on some point or other is being denied him by a superior. In such a case he has immediate recourse to any one of three ex-

THE SUMMER HOME OF THE MACY FAMILY

Recreation in the modern store stands side by side with education in perfecting the individual employee

pedients: he may take his case to the department of training, to the general manager of the store, or to one of the officers of the corporation. As a rule, however, the difficulty can be straightened out in the first of these avenues of appeal, which is an automatic clearing-house for all matters of personnel. The heads of this department have been chosen as much as anything for the sympathy which enables them to review any employee's case intelligently and fairly and for the influence that makes it possible for them to see at all times that full justice is being done. While the fact that the worker, himself, may take the matter to the general manager or even to one of the three members of the firm, is a practical guarantee against persecution of any sort.

Just off the corner of the recreation room on the third floor is the private office of the assistant superintendent of training. Her title sounds rather formidable and does justice neither to her job nor to her personality: for in reality she combines the qualities of a charming hostess, an efficient manager and a mother confessor.

In the Macy book of information for employees there is a paragraph under the heading, "Department of Training," which says: "It is the purpose of this department to interest itself in all the employees of this organization. Do not hesitate to go with your troubles to the assistant superintendent of training, whose duty it is to interest herself in you: both in the store and at your home. She will be glad to give you advice, both in business and in personal matters."

And so she has her hands full, and sometimes her

heart as well; for, among five thousand folk of every sort and kind, there are bound to be many perplexing personal problems and troubles, to which the very best kind of help is the kindly and disinterested advice of a sympathetic and understanding person. And when that person is a woman—a woman of rare tact—the problem is generally apt to approach its solution. Which makes for friendship, not merely between the worker and that woman, but between the worker and the store. And so still another rivet is clinched in the great morale bridge between the business machine and the human units that enable it to function so very well indeed. And the Macy spirit becomes an even more tangible thing.

As one goes through the store he finds many evidences of the things that go to upbuild that spirit. It may be only a printed sign cautioning courtesy and cheerfulness, not merely between the store workers and its patrons, but between the members of the Macy family, themselves. "A smile with every package and a 'thank you' as good-bye," rings one. And remember that other, again more cautious: "In speaking say 'we' and 'our,' not 'I' and 'mine.'" It may be the warm hand of friendship from the member of the reception committee to the new girl that comes to work under the Herald Square roof, or it may be any of the long-planned, coolly devised methods of social justice to the store employee. These last are never to be overlooked.

For instance, three months after the day that a new employee first arrives to work at Macy's, membership

in the Macy Mutual Aid Association becomes automatic. In no small way it becomes a real part of his job. It is the object of the M. M. A. A. to provide and maintain a fund for the assistance of its members during sickness and of their families or dependents in case of death. Dues in this association are graded according to the worker's salary, consist of one per cent. of the salary up to thirty dollars; while the sick benefits are two-thirds of the salary, limited by a benefit of twenty dollars. The death benefits are five times the weekly salary, with a minimum of sixty dollars and a maximum of one hundred and fifty dollars.

It is obvious that these dues do not of themselves pay the benefits. The house "chips in." Yet not through sympathy, but through one of the tenets of good business as we moderns have now begun to know it.

"It would be poor business for me, indeed," said a silk manufacturer of Connecticut to me not long ago, "to let my people become sick. I want no germ diseases in my mills. Neither do I want the mills to cease their continuous operation. That, too, is poor business. And so the sickness that may cost my worker ten dollars may easily cost me twenty-five—in the stoppage of my plant, alone."

The control of the Macy Mutual Aid Association is, moreover, vested solely in the hands of the store employees. An itemized statement of its receipts and its disbursements as well as its proceedings is posted each month on the store bulletin boards and printed in *Sparks*, so that every member of the organization may

know its exact affairs. It decidedly does not work in the dark.

I should be derelict, indeed, in regard to this whole question of health in modern industry—and of the particular modern industry of which this book treats—if I neglected in these pages that corner of the high-set eighth floor—flooded by sunshine during the greater part of each pleasant day—where sits the Macy hospital, conducted by the Macy Mutual Aid Association. It is, of course, solely an emergency hospital, yet one where doctors, nurses, dentists and a chiropodist are constantly on duty. Three doctors—two men and one woman—consult with and prescribe for the patients, two dentists look after their teeth, and a chiropodist takes care of that prime asset to all salespeople—the feet. Those members of the hospital staff are professional men and women of the first rank and they work with the best and latest equipment. Although the emergency hospital is primarily for the services of the store workers it stands also at the service of any one who may come into the building and need its services. For instance, in case a customer becomes ill, a wheel-chair is sent, and he or she, as the case may be, is taken to the hospital for immediate restorative treatment.

One or two final phases of this family life upon a huge scale in the very heart of New York and I am done with it. Thrift, in the Macy category of the making of a good worker, comes only next to good health. Under that same widespread roof there is a

savings bank for the sole use of Macy folk. Any amount from five cents upward is accepted as a deposit and the fact that good use is made of this constant incentive to thrift is evidenced by the continued and prosperous operation of the institution. It has not been necessary to organize it as a full-fledged savings bank. At the end of each day it transfers its funds, by means of a special messenger, to one of the largest of New York savings banks which handles the accounts directly. The law does not permit a savings bank in the State of New York to open branches—else that would have been done at Macy's long ago. The messenger method was the only feasible substitute.

Believing that even the most provident may occasionally have good reasons, indeed, for wishing to borrow money, the heads of the house have set aside a permanent fund as a loan reserve for the Macy folk. Any one who has been in the store's employ for at least three months may, upon advancing even ordinarily satisfactory reasons, borrow from this fund. The limit is a sum which can be repaid in ten weekly installments. No security is required nor is any interest charged. The employee is bound by nothing but his honor.

That sixty-four years of continuous operation have established the commercial success of Macy's should be patent to you by this time. But now that you have known of the present-day family that dwells beneath its roof, you may ask: Has this policy toward its personnel worked out in hard practice? The question is indeed a fair one. To carry it still further, is this

machine of modern business humanized and inspired in fact as well as in theory? One cannot help but think of the machine. Machines *are* hard. Generally they are fabricated in that hardest of all metals—steel. Can steel be warmed and tempered? Can the fact be recognized that the units of the Macy store are human and warm; and not steel and cold?

I think so. I imagine that you would have the answer to all these questions if you could talk for a little time with Jimmie Woods, whom we saw, but a short time hence, as a push-cart horse for the early Macy's and who has come today to be the assistant superintendent of the store's delivery department. His new job requires much more push than that old-time one. As a caption-line in a recent issue of *Sparks* aptly said: "Jimmie Woods delivers the goods." Metaphorically speaking, the house of Macy does the same thing. And at no point more than in its treatment of its human factors.

The day was not so very long ago when the life of a salesperson, even in a New York store of the better class, was not a particularly enviable thing. We saw, when we discussed the earlier Macy's, the long hours and the low wages of the rank and file of the organization. These things have changed today—in all department-stores that are worthy of the name. Public opinion was partly responsible for the change. But I think quite as large a factor was the realization that gradually was forced upon the minds of the merchants themselves that the old methods were poor business methods. Macy's knows that today. We have seen

the man who came to New York fifteen years ago with eleven dollars and a suitcase come to a high-salaried position with the house today; the retail furniture salesman earning over six thousand dollars a year, the twenty-five buyers at ten thousand a year and upward, as well as those at twenty-five thousand a year and upward. And we know that every one of these men and women have been the product of the Macy organization—from the moment that they began at the very bottom of the ladder.

And, lest you still think I befog the question, permit me to add that the minimum weekly wage of the woman employee in Macy's today is $14.00; and the average pay—apart from that of the executives and sub-executives—the men and women who, in the store's own nomenclature, are classed as "specials" and exempted from the time-disc record of their comings and their goings—is $25.00.

Have I now answered your question fairly? If still you wobble and are uncertain, permit me to call your attention to the service records of the store. They speak more eloquently than aught else can of the loyalty and the interest of its workers. Qualities such as these are not generated under bad working practices of any sort.

The records tell—and tell accurately, as well as eloquently. A Macy man was recently retired on a pension—the store's list of pensioners runs to a considerable length—after a round half-century of service. Others will soon follow in his footsteps. There are today upon the rolls ninety-two men and women who

have been with it for more than twenty-five years. In the delivery department alone there are twenty-three men who have records of twenty years or more; and of these there are three who have been there more than forty years. Three hundred members of the Macy family have records of fifteen years or over, fifteen hundred have been with it upwards of five years and—despite the recent after-the-war difficulties of maintaining labor morale and organization—only about one-quarter of the force have come within the twelvemonth. The labor turnover in Macy's is low indeed—and constantly is growing lower.

These figures, it seems to me, are the surest indication that the store's workers are treated fairly. Moreover, they alone show clearly the workings of its announced policy to give its own people every possible opportunity to grow within its ranks. In fact, no man or woman can stand still long at Macy's and continue to hold his or her job. Progress is a very necessary requisite there. And in order that progress may be recognized, steadily and fairly, system comes in once again to stabilize a very natural phase of human development. As the Macy employee shows new capabilities or additional industry, recommendations for increases in his remuneration are made by his department manager to a salary committee, appointed for this sole purpose. Periodically this committee receives a list of all the store folk who have not received an increase for a period of six months. The list is carefully reviewed and, whenever and wherever it can be justified, the pay envelope of the employee is fattened.

Macy's is, after all, a very human institution. The machine may be steel-like, but it is not steel. It is flesh and blood and human understanding. I sometimes think of it as a country town, rather than as a family—one of those nice, old-fashioned sorts of country towns, where most of the residents know one another, where there is an efficient governing body and where the community spirit is one of the strongest factors in its progress. Being human it is fallible, being fallible it still has something for which to work; and in fulfilling this obligation of work it is carrying out its destiny.

Tomorrow

I. In Which Macy's Prepares to Build Anew

YESTERDAY, when Milady of Manhattan went for her shopping along the tree-lined reaches of Fourteenth Street, and found her way into that perennially fascinating shop at the corner of Sixth Avenue which specialized in its ribbons and its gloves and its rare exotic imported perfumes, she dreamed but little, if indeed she dreamed at all, of a Macy's that some day should stand intrenched at Herald Square and embrace a whole block-front of Broadway. Today Milady, finding her way into that small triangular "Square" in the very heart of Manhattan—still on the sharp lookout for ribbons and gloves and rare exotic perfumes—and Heaven only knows what else beside—may little dream of the changes that a tomorrow—

Tomorrow—what business has a book such as this to be talking of tomorrow; a vague, fantastic thing that only fools may seek to interpret in advance?

We have seen between these covers quite a number of things—some of them passing odd things—yet classified among the factors of good business, according to all of its modern definitions. And to them we shall now add another—the understanding and the correct interpretation of tomorrow. I think that when I depicted Mr. Macy standing with his daughter,

Florence, at the corner of Thirty-fourth Street and Broadway half a century ago and explaining how there would be the business center of New York fifty years hence, I called attention to the sharp commercial fact that a great machine of modern business goes ahead quite as much upon the vision and the foresight of the men that guide it as upon their prudence. Which means in still another way, the proper understanding of tomorrows. And that understanding today is quite as much an asset of Macy's as its real estate, its cash balances in the banks, or the millions of dollars standing in the stock upon its shelves.

More than a decade ago the big store in Herald Square first began to feel its own growing pains. The fact that ten years before that it had been planned as the largest single department-store building in the United States, if not in the entire world, availed nothing when business came in even greater measure than the most far-sighted of its planners had dared to dream. Within three or four years after the time that the caravans of trucks and drays had moved Macy's the mile uptown from the old store to the new, changes were under way in the new building, changes seeking to make an economy of space here, another economy there—everywhere that an odd corner could be utilized to the better advantage of the store and its patrons, it was at once so used. Finally it became necessary to abandon the exhibition hall that was originally located on the ninth floor and thrust that great space into one of the larger non-selling departments of the enter-

prise; and two or three years later an entire extra floor was added atop of the big building—adding a goodly ten per cent. to its million square feet of floor space already existing.

Yet even these changes could not solve the final problem. Macy's still refused to stay put. Its growth was relentless, unending. Each fresh provision made for its expansion was quickly swallowed up, with the result that the proprietors of the store finally faced the inevitable: the need of making a real addition to their plant, not a series of picayune little extensions, but one fine, sweeping move which should be as distinct a step forward in Macy progress as the mighty hegira that occurred when the store moved north from Fourteenth Street to Thirty-fourth—a little more than eighteen years ago.

And, facing the inevitable, Macy's quickly made up its mind. It never has been noted for any particular hesitancy. It decided to step ahead.

Forecasting tomorrow in New York is not, after all, so vast a task as it might seem to be at a careless first glance. That is, if you do not put your tomorrow too far ahead—say more than ten or a dozen years at the most. I am perfectly willing to sit in these beginning days of 1922 and to assert that to attempt to forecast 1952 or even 1942 is not a particularly alluring pastime—if one has any real desire for accuracy. But 1932 is not so difficult. It is the business of skilled experts to interpret 1932 in 1922; a business which incidentally is rendered vastly easier in New York today

than it was ten years ago by two hard and settled facts—the one, the wonderfully efficient new zoning plan of the city, and the other, the construction of the Pennsylvania Railroad Station on Seventh and Eighth Avenues, from Thirty-first to Thirty-third Streets.

The first of these factors should hold the strictly commercial development of the city—save for local outlying hubs or centers—south of Fifty-ninth Street. The block-a-year uptown movement of Manhattan for whole decades past has finally been halted; and halted effectually. Central Park has of course proved no little barrier in fixing Fifty-ninth Street as the arbitrary point of stoppage. But the zoning law, protecting the fine residence streets north of that point, and the Pennsylvania Station are also factors not to be overlooked.

True it is that at the very moment that these paragraphs are being written whole groups of new business buildings are being opened, in Fifty-seventh, Fifty-eighth and Fifty-ninth Streets, in the center of Manhattan. But other and bigger buildings are going up in the cross-streets far to the south of these. Count that much for the Pennsylvania Station. For it, and it alone, has proved the salvation of Thirty-fourth Street. Macy's, Altman's, McCreery's, the Waldorf-Astoria, the Hotel McAlpin—none of these alone nor all of them together—might have been able to save Thirty-fourth Street from becoming another Fourteenth, or another Twenty-third—a dull, wide thoroughfare given almost entirely in its later days to wholesale trade of one sort or another.

The Pennsylvania Station could do, and did do, the trick. Opened in 1910—but eight years after Macy's came first to Thirty-fourth Street and that brisk thoroughfare of today was in the very youth of its prosperity—the traffic which it handled day by day and month by month at that time was more than doubled in 1920. Not only has the business of the parent road that occupies it practically doubled in that decade, but the inclusion of the important through trains of the Baltimore & Ohio and the Lehigh Valley Railroads, to say nothing of the traffic of the huge suburban Long Island system increasing by leaps and bounds each twelvemonth, has begun at last to tax the facilities of a structure seemingly far too big ever to be severely taxed. In recent months the cementing of a closer traffic alliance between the New Haven and the Pennsylvania systems renders it a foregone conclusion that more and more of the through trains from New England will be brought to the big white-pillared station in Seventh Avenue.

You cannot down a street on which there stands a city gateway, particularly if the city gateway be one through which there sweeps all the way from fifty to sixty thousand folk a day. Thirty-fourth Street cannot be downed. Remember that, if you will. It will not be compelled to share the rather bitter fate of its former wide-set compeers just to the south. This much is known today.

And being known, it settles forever even the possibility of Macy's moving uptown once again. It, too, is fixed. It has cast its die with the street called Thirty-

fourth and with Thirty-fourth it is going to remain. So Macy's buys the realty to the west of its present building and prepares thereon to erect, in connection with its present edifice, a great new store building—in ground space one hundred and twenty-five by two hundred feet—in height, nineteen full floors above the street (and two basements beneath)—in all, some 500,000 square feet of floor-space or close to fifty per cent. added to the 1,100,000 square feet of the present store.

Offhand, it would seem to be a comparatively easy matter for the proprietors of a store, such as Macy's, to go to their architect and say to him:

"Here is a fine plot, one hundred and twenty-five feet by two hundred. We want you to design and build for us upon it a modern retail building—high enough to provide all necessary facilities and scientific enough to bring it not merely abreast of other stores across the land, but a good long jump ahead of them."

After which the architect would call for his young men and their draughting-boards and proceed, upon white paper, to erect his department-store.

But his problem in this case is not white paper—at least white paper undefiled. The real problem is a perfectly good store building at the east end of the Macy plot—a building far too good and far too modern to be "scrapped"—in any recognized sense of the word. It was built to last all the way from half a century to a full century and its owners have not the slightest intention of pulling it down. It must remain the chief front of the enlarged Macy store. The caryatides

upon either side of its main doors, the red star that surmounts them, must continue to look down into busy Broadway, as they have been looking for nearly two decades past.

It happens, too, that the store itself was never designed for extensions toward the west. In the conception of its original architect there was a distinct section set out at the west end of the present building for purely service and non-selling purposes. These included, upon the ground-floor, the great tunnel and merchandise unloading docks for incoming trucks, similar ones for the outgoing merchandise, freight elevators a-plenty; and in between them and through them a truly vast variety of working provision, shops, offices, school and comfort rooms, and the like. A good feature, this section—which occupies almost the exact site of the former Koster & Bial Theater—but tremendously in the way when one comes to consider the extension of the store toward the west.

A final factor of this particular reconstruction problem—and perhaps the greatest of all—lies in the fact that it must be carried forward while the store is doing its regular business. Even when the peak load of its traffic is reached—those fearfully hard weeks that immediately precede the Christmas holiday—the work-aday routine of Macy's must not be seriously disturbed. Which complicates vastly the architect's problem. It is one thing to design and to erect a store building whose tenant does not approach the structure with his wares for sale until the merchant has given his final release, and another—infinitely harder—thing to build,

and build efficiently, as business goes forward all the while. The machine as it grinds must be rebuilded. And all the while it must lose none of its efficiency.

Yet, when all is said and done, an architect's life is made up of a number of things of this sort. And the associated architects of the new Macy store—Messrs. Robert D. Kohn and William S. Holden—have not permitted the overwhelming problem of its reconstruction to fill them with anything even remotely approaching a state of panic. For that is not an architect's way.

They have, from the beginning, come toward the big problem quietly, sanely and efficiently. At the very beginning and in company with two of the officers of the corporation they went upon an extended trip through the more modern department-stores across the land. Here, there, everywhere, they found features worth noting and collating. When they were done with their journeys they had, as a foundation for their studies upon the new Macy store, a sort of standardized practice of most of its fellows across the land.

This preliminary completed, the engineering member of the partnership, Mr. Holden, began an intensive study of the fundamental factors of the business machine that he was to enlarge. To begin with there was its traffic—divided, as we have seen in earlier chapters, into three great and fairly distinct avenues: the merchandise, the shoppers who come to purchase it, and the employees who wait upon their needs.

It is fairly essential that these three streams of traffic be kept separate, save at such points where, for the

conduct of the business, they must be brought together.

Here, then, was a real opportunity for study. Mr. Holden began with the traffic streams of the shoppers.

Obviously, and despite the growing importance and activity of the Pennsylvania Station, to say nothing of the west side subway, which runs down Seventh Avenue in front of it, the main traffic streams of shoppers must continue to come into Macy's from Broadway. The star of Broadway is even more firmly set in the heavens of New York than that of Thirty-fourth Street.

These main traffic streams within the store are, then, roughly speaking, three in number; one comes from the northeast corner—at Thirty-fifth Street—another from the southeast corner at Thirty-fourth Street—the third still shows a decided fondness for the impressive center doors upon Broadway. Within the store they unite and then separate into a variety of smaller currents. A goodly portion of these violate all the similes of streams and proceed upstairs at the rate of about 10,300 folk an hour at the busiest times of busy days. And there are an astonishingly large number of these times. Of these 10,300, about 7,400 will ascend upon the great escalator, which reaches up into the sixth, or last selling floor, of the present store.

When this escalator was first built, eighteen years ago, it was looked upon as hardly less than a transportation marvel. Every similar device that had preceded it was known as a single-file moving-stairway, with the capacity estimated at sixty persons a minute, or 3,600 an hour. By making its escalator double-file, Macy's not only slightly more than doubled its capacity but

rendered it the full equivalent of at least twenty-five passenger elevators of the largest size.

The man whose business it is to have a sort of first-hand acquaintance with 1932 said that by that year Macy's would need to take close to twenty thousand folk an hour to its upper floors. He was not only estimating upon the growth of New York, but upon the growth of the store itself.

"You will have to add another of the double escalators," said he, "that will bring your lifting capacity upon the two moving stairways up to almost fifteen thousand persons an hour."

An elevator of modern size and speed in a department-store with seven or eight selling floors ought to lift two hundred and forty persons an hour. This, as you can quickly find out for yourself, means that there will be needed for the new store but twenty passenger elevators to make good that deficit between increased escalator capacity and the total number of folk to be carried upstairs. And this, in itself, is a most moderate increase. The store already has fourteen modern passenger elevators. Credit this much, if you will, to the escalator.

So it goes, then, that the new Macy's will have a second double-file escalator on the opposite side of the main aisle, which is the store's own Broadway, and in the same relative relation to it. It will run as far as the fourth floor which in the new scheme of Macy things is to be devoted to the important business of toy selling.

What goes up must come down. Shoppers are no exception to this old rule. If you still think that they are, stand late some busy afternoon at the main stair of Macy's and watch them descend. They frequently come at the rate of one hundred to the minute. And yet this is but a single stair!

It is neither practical nor modern greatly to increase stairway capacity in remodeling Macy's and so the question of a descending escalator thrusts itself upon the architects' attention. Despite a certain old-fashioned prejudice against it on the part of some old-fashioned New Yorkers, a descending escalator is not only practicable but entirely safe. Otherwise Macy's would not even consider its installation. The store planning experts went out to Chicago a few months ago, however, and into a great retail establishment there which boasts twelve selling floors. Escalators were its one salvation—descending, as well as ascending. The Macy party saw old ladies, women with children in their arms—everyone who walked, save only those walking upon crutches, using this quick and constant method of descent. They found the same devices in Boston—in subway stations as well as department-stores—and being used with equal facility. Straightway they decided that the New York shopper was neither more timid nor more reluctant to use a new idea than was her Boston or her Chicago sister. A descending escalator was placed in the plans for the new Macy's—for the use of the store's patrons.

Still another ascending and descending escalator; this time for the store's own family. Remember that

here is a second stream, whose prompt and efficient handling is quite as important as that of the shoppers. The broad stair in Thirty-fourth Street at which the majority of the family arrives, between eight-thirty and eight-forty-five of the business morning, is frequently choked with the rush of incoming employees. It will never be choked once the new Macy's is done. For then the workers will be handled in great volume upon a double escalator, not merely double-file, but double in the sense that ascent and descent are handled simultaneously and in compact space, very much as the double stairways that are installed in modern schoolhouses and industrial plants.

In the enlarged building the locker rooms and the other facilities of the arrival of the store's employees will be placed upon the second floor and the first and second mezzanines; retained from the present plan, but very greatly enlarged. The Macy worker comes to them by means of the escalator, quickly and easily, and in a similar fashion ascends or descends to his or her department. It sounds simple and easy but it is not quite so easy when one comes to plan for a maximum of 8,800 employees—in 1932.

A third traffic stream remains for our consideration—and the architect's. In many respects it is the most difficult. Human beings, to a large extent at least, can move themselves. Goods cannot. Yet obviously the great stream of merchandise into the building and then out again must never be permitted to clog its arteries—not for a day, nor even for an hour. This means that

there must be not only plenty of channels and conduits for it, but ample reservoir space as well. Which, being translated, means of course generous warehousing rooms, of one sort or another.

Perhaps it would be well before we come to the ingenious plans for making this inanimate stream most animate indeed, to consider the general plan of Macy's as it will be after its structural renaissance. The exterior of the present great building will remain practically unchanged. Just back of it and to the west of it on the new plot, one hundred and twenty-five feet in depth in both Thirty-fourth and Thirty-fifth Streets, and extending the full two hundred feet between them, will be erected a new steel and concrete building, harmonizing in its façade and of the most modern type of construction; as we have already seen, nineteen stories in height with two sub-basements in addition. The first ten stories of this structure, at the exact floor levels of the old, will be thrown into the existing building and the lower seven of them used for selling purposes. The uppermost three stories of the combined building—covering the entire Macy site—will be used, as we shall see in a moment or two, for the reception and the warehousing of the merchandise, and other non-selling activities of the store.

The nine stories of the new addition which will rise tower-like above the parent building are destined to be used entirely for non-selling functions. Thus from the architects' plans we see the executive and financial offices, including that of advertising upon the thirteenth and the fifteenth floors of this super-cupola;

and the store's own great laundry upon the high nineteenth. The department of training and the bureau of planning, with an assembly room, will share the sixteenth. The more purely recreational features, however, the Men's Club and the Community Club and the lounging rooms and library, are placed as low as the accessible eighth floor. The general manager's and employment offices will be as low as the second mezzanine—for obvious reasons of convenience.

None of these departments will be hampered for a long time to come, as they have been hampered for a number of years past, by a fearful lack of elbow room. The new plans have provided for abundant facilities of this and every other sort. The employees' cafeterias also are to go into the new section—also upon the eighth, or public restaurant floor. They will be greatly enlarged over their present capacity.

These non-selling facilities are given their own elevator service from the street; a separate and distinct entrance there. The purpose of this last quickly becomes evident. There are many occasions—nights and Sundays even—when some or all of the recreation facilities are in use far beyond the regular store hours. Access to them, entirely free and separate from the store itself, is an enormous working convenience, and the new Macy's has been planned to be filled with working conveniences.

The elevator as well as the escalator will play a vastly important part in the fabrication of the new Macy's. The one has by no means been overshadowed by the

growing importance of the other. There are to be in all fifty-six elevators, of one type or another, in the reconstructed building. Of all these none is more interesting than the ingenious lifts by which whole motor trucks, laden as well as empty, are carried into the structure, up eleven floors to the merchandising reception rooms and down into the basement and sub-basement for filling for the city delivery.

Now are we back again to the handling of that merchandise stream which we first began to consider but a moment ago. At the beginning we can make assertion that in the entire history of retail selling no more ingenious scheme has been devised for the orderly and rapid movement of goods in and out of a department-store.

This flow is kept normal and downward by the simple process of first taking the loaded incoming trucks up to the eleventh floor of the building for unloading. In the present store—as well as in a good many other stores—a great amount of immensely valuable ground floor space is given over to the various functions of receiving and distributing merchandise. We have seen long ago how a modern store values this ground floor space. For instance, in relation to the value of, let us say, the third floor, it is about as ten to one.

Neither does Macy's propose to clutter the sidewalk frontage of even the least important of its frontage streets—Thirty-fifth Street—by long lines of motor trucks or drays, receiving or discharging goods. In fact this sort of thing has become practically impossible in the really important cities of the America of today.

If municipal ordinance permits it, public sentiment rarely does. And the keen merchant of today—to say nothing of tomorrow—never ignores public sentiment.

So, to the eleventh floor the motor trucks must go—on two huge high-speed freight elevators which open directly into Thirty-fifth Street. Our horseless age makes this possible. The modern architect, planning for the congested heart of the island of Manhattan, can indeed and reverently thank God for the coming of the gasoline engine and the electric storage battery—to say nothing of the engineers who helped to make them possible.

Upon that eleventh floor there will extend, for the full width of the building, a giant quay, or high-level platform, with its stout floor at the exact level of the floors of the standardized motor trucks of Macy's (the comparatively small proportion of "foreign" or outside vehicles that bring merchandise to the store are to be unloaded at the Thirty-fifth Street doorways and not admitted within the building). The unloading under the present well-developed system is a short matter; the trucks may quickly be despatched back to the street once again; while the refuse and debris of the packers goes to appropriate bins behind them.

Through chutes and sliding-ways the merchandise descends a single floor to the great tenth story—extending through both the present building and the new one to come. Here it will be quickly classified and placed upon a conveyor which moves at the level of and between the two sides of a double table some five or

six hundred feet in length which will extend the greater part of the length of the enlarged store. From this center table—the backbone of the whole scheme of this particular distribution—will extend in parallel aisles at right angles to it, whole hundreds of bins and shelves and compartments. The entire arrangement will resemble nothing so much as a huge double gridiron, with many tiny interstices.

Now do you begin to see the operation of this scheme? If not, let me endeavor to make it more clear to you. This miniature and silent city, whose straight and regular streets are lined in turn with miniature apartment houses of merchandise, is zoned—into six great zones. Every selling department of the store—118 in the present one—is assigned to one or the other of these zones. There it keeps its reserve stock. It is, in truth, a reservoir.

Now, see the plan function! The men's shoe department is out of a certain small part of its highly diversified stock. It sends a requisition up to its representative upon the tenth floor. It is a matter of minutes—almost of seconds—to locate the necessary cartons in the simplified and scientifically arranged compartments and shelves; a matter certainly of mere seconds to despatch them down to the selling department.

For this, the second thrust of the goods-stream through the new Macy's, especial provisions have been made by the installation of six so-called utility units. Three of these are placed at equal intervals along the Thirty-fourth Street wall of the enlarged building;

the other three at equal intervals upon its Thirty-fifth Street edge. Each unit consists of one elevator (large enough to hold two of the rolling-carts, standardized for the floor movement of merchandise through the aisles of the selling departments of the store), one small dummy elevator (for the handling of single packages of unusual size or type), and a spiral chute (this last for the despatch of sold goods).

The selling-floor location of these utility units determines the zoning system of the warehouses on the tenth. There is a zone to each unit. While from that zone the requisitioned merchandise descends to the selling department which has asked for it by its own unit—which always is closest to it. Haul is reduced to a minimum. And system becomes simplicity.

With the actual selling of the goods in the store that is to come we have no concern at this moment. It is quite enough to say that the methods and the ideals that have brought Macy selling up to its present point are to be continued there, in the main at least, although broadened and advanced as future necessity may dictate. But with the despatch of the goods once sold in the new store we have an intimate and personal interest.

We have bought our pair of shoes. The financial end of the transaction is concluded. We have asked—as most of us ask—to have them delivered. Now follow their movement:

The clerk takes them to the packer. This, however, is but a mere detail. It is their future course that interests us. And if we had eyes properly X-rayed

and farseeing we might observe that from the hands of the packer they will go presently to the spiral descending chute of the nearest utility unit.

Now we shall indeed need our new X-ray eyes. They follow the package for us—down the chute—with its gradients and curvatures so cleverly devised as to bring our purchase to the basement in just the right time and in just the right order—and into and upon the next stage of its progress.

Steadily moving conveyor-belts along each outer wall of the building receive the constant droppage of the packages from the six spirals of the utility units. Together these two long belts converge upon a terminal, the revolving-table, in the terminology of the present store. And here our packages receive fresh personal attention.

In the chapter upon Macy's delivery department we paid a careful attention to this revolving-table—which really is not a table at all and does not revolve. We saw it, then, as the very heart of the complex clearing-house of Macy distributions. It is, however, in itself a wonderfully simple thing, and yet when it was first installed it was regarded as nothing less than a triumph of efficiency.

Fortunately we do progress in this gray old world. Today we see how the revolving-table can be improved. For one thing, today we see it cramped and inelastic—no more than eight men may work at it at a single shift. Yet when it was built no one in Macy's dreamed that more than eight men would ever be required to work

at it at a single time. And even in times of great emergency, but eight!

At the revolving-table in the new store, not eight but forty men may work simultaneously—when necessity dictates. The change has been effected by the simple process of elongating the "table." If a revolving-ring may be changed from round to square—and this was the very thing that Macy's accomplished in its present basement—why not from square to oblong? There is no negative answer to this question. And oblong it will become. And a present handling capacity of forty thousand packages a day can be increased to all the way from seventy-five thousand to ninety thousand.

Yet the main principle changes not. It is only in detail that one sees one's shoes traveling outward on a different path in 1931 from that of 1921. The great conveyors that lead from the revolving-table of today to the various delivery classifications as they are now made, will so lead in the new arrangement of things to such classifications as may then be made: only they will no longer be revolving-tables, but will in due time become the moving backbone of very long tables in the basement mezzanine, similar to the one which we saw extending the full length of the great tenth floor. And from those long tables, running the entire width of the building and up just under the basement ceiling, the sheet-writers will recognize their individual group of packages (by means of the clearly written numerals upon them), lift them off the slowly moving belt and make record of them, for the delivery department's own protection. After which, it is but the twist of the

wrist to thrust them into the bins, separately assigned to each driver's run.

So go our shoes, or come, if you prefer to have it that way. Rapidly, orderly, systematically. System never departs from their handling. Even in the driver's own little compartment-bin there are four levels, or shelves, and each is inclined gently and floored with rollers so that he can pick out the packages for his run with greater facility. And in placing the packages upon each of these levels, the sheet-writer, well trained to his job, begins a rough process of assortment by streets.

Now we are come to wagon delivery, itself. Now we shall see why Macy's will not have to clutter Thirty-fourth Street with a long row of its delivery trucks. The length of such a row may easily be estimated when one realizes that sixty electric trucks will stand simultaneously at sixty loading stations in the new basement, with a reserve or reservoir space there for twenty-two more. Moreover, this basement will serve as a garage at night and on Sundays for these trucks. There is no fire risk whatsoever in the storage of an electrically driven motor vehicle. So the new Macy basement will not only be able to store this considerable fleet but to charge its batteries and make necessary light repairs upon it from time to time.

Access to and from this basement—and the sub-basement—is by means of elevators; not only the two which we have seen reaching aloft to the eleventh floor, but two more just beside them for sole service between

the level and the two basements. As a matter of operating expediency it will be easy indeed to arrange in the early morning rush, or at any other time when emergency may so demand, to operate all four elevators in exclusive service between the street and basements. With such a battery Macy's can perform a genuine rapid-fire of discharging merchandise.

To the mind of the novice there immediately flashes the thought: why not use ramps—long, sloping driveways—from the street level to the basement? Long ago the architects of the new building asked themselves that very question. It was, in this particular case at least, rather hard to answer. The main basement of Macy's is very high. To install a ramp—double-tracked, of course, for vehicles both ascending and descending—of any easy practical grade would therefore have required a great deal of valuable floor-space. So, for the moment, they dismissed the ramp idea for motor trucks and held to that of elevators. The Boston Store in Chicago solved the problem. It is the same store that has successfully installed descending escalators, floor upon floor.

Out of the sub-basement of that Chicago store the Macy investigators saw thirty-two cars come, all inside of eight minutes; and all upon elevators. That settled the question for the big shop in Herald Square. Elevators it should have for this service, and elevators it will have, even for the big five-ton trucks that go into the deep sub-basement for the hampers for suburban delivery as well as large special packages. Furniture, however, as in the present store, will be both sold and

packed and shipped from an upper floor of its own, the large truck elevators to the eleventh floor being also used for this purpose.

The sub-basement of the new plan is in so many respects a replica of the main basement delivery service that it requires no special description here. It, too, has been designed, not only amply large enough for the present needs of Macy's, but for that mythical traffic of 1932, which we now know is really not mythical at all, but a matter of rather exact scientific reckoning.

Architects' drawings are indeed fascinating things; doubly fascinating when one comes to consider all the infinite thought and labor and patience which have entered into their fabrication. I shall not, however, carry you further into the details of the plans for the new Macy's. You now have seen enough to give you at least a fair idea of the main structure for the enlarged store. You have seen how carefully and how ingeniously the great main traffic streams through the huge edifice are to be carried—to be brought together, when they needs must be brought together, and kept apart when properly they should be kept apart. Add, in your own mind, to this fundamental structure, all of the refinements which you expect to find in the modern retail establishment today and you may begin to depict for yourself the Macy's that is to come—to construct for yourself at least a partial vision of the year 1932 in Herald Square.

II. L'Envoi

YESTERDAY Milady of Manhattan in her hoop-skirt and crinoline; today Milady in thick furs above her knees and thin silk stockings and high-heeled pumps below them: tomorrow . . .

Why will you persist in dragging in tomorrow? Is it not enough to know that tomorrow Milady of the great metropolis of the Americas will still be shopping? You may set tomorrow a year hence, twenty years hence, fifty years in the misty future that is to come upon us and still make that statement in perfect safety. And twenty years, fifty years, a hundred years hence, even, Macy's should still be in Herald Square ready to wait upon her needs and upon the needs of her men and children, too.

To forecast far into the future is indeed dangerous. Only rash men undertake it. We know that 1932 is one thing, but that 1952 or even 1942 is quite another one. A savant of uptown Manhattan, who has a nice facility for handling census figures, not long ago predicted that by 1950 little old New York would hold within its boundaries sixteen million people. He may know. I don't. And you are privileged to take your guess—with one man's guess almost if not quite as good as another's.

A New York of sixteen million souls is an alluring

picture, if a bewildering one, withal. It is a fairly bewildering town with its six million of today. But I have not the slightest doubt that Rowland Hussey Macy said the selfsame thing of the New York of six hundred and fifty thousand souls, to which he first came, away back there in 1858.

And the Macy's of 1952, serving its fair and goodly portion of those sixteen million souls, is indeed an alluring picture, which you may best construct for yourself. The store, itself, does well when it plans so definitely for 1932. Nevertheless, before you finally close the pages of this book, I should like to have it record a final picture upon your mind. It is the picture of a really great store. It runs from Broadway to Seventh Avenue, perhaps all the way to Eighth. It begins at Thirty-fourth Street and runs north—one, two, possibly even three or four blocks, or goodly portions of them. It employs ten, twelve, fifteen thousand workers. There are a thousand motor trucks in its delivery service—and a hundred aëroplanes as well. It has sixteen sub-stations, instead of six. Its own delivery limits run north to Peekskill and east to Bridgeport and to Huntington and west and south through at least half of New Jersey.

Yet, above all this new enterprise there still towers the high addition which 1923 saw completed and added to the edifice, with the huge and flaming word "MACY'S" emblazoned by white electricity upon the blackened skies of night, visible all the way from Seventh Avenue to the thickly peopled range of the Orange mountains.

"Macy's," whistles the small boy upon the North River ferryboat, who has traveled afar with his geography book. "Macy's! That's a regular Gibraltar of a store!"

THE END

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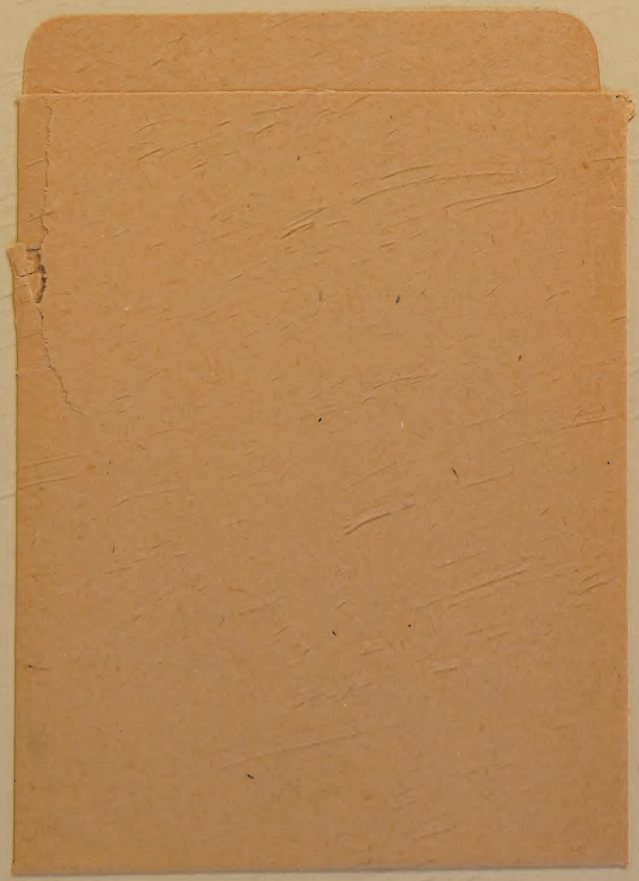

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